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Introduction

Hybridity, Identity, and Latino Popular Music

Oye Como Va! I selected this phrase as the main title for this book because of its exhortation to pay attention, in this instance, to the sonic spaces that surround us and, in particular, to the rich mixture of sounds produced and consumed by U.S. Latinos. Translated as "Listen to what's going on!" or "Listen to how it goes!"—but more succinctly as "Listen up!"—this phrase is the title of the famous song composed by the Puerto Rican mambo and salsa bandleader/percussionist Tito Puente in 1963. A veteran of New York's glorious Latin music boom in the 1940s and 1950s, Puente borrowed the signature introduction of "Oye Como Va!" from an older piece called "Chanchullo," composed by the Afro-Cuban bassist Israel "Cachao" López; the rest of the composition, a cha-cha, was original. Puente may not have imagined his song as being anything other than Spanish Caribbean, but, despite its stylistic grounding in Cuba, its composer was born in New York City, raised in a multiethnic U.S. metropolis, and surrounded by an array of Latin and non-Latin styles.

In 1970, a rock version of "Oye Como Va!" recorded by Carlos Santana hit number 13 on *Billboard*'s Top 100 chart. Unlike the U.S.-born Puente, Santana was an immigrant, born in Mexico and raised in Tijuana before moving to San Francisco with his parents when he was an adolescent. In reconfiguring Puente's cha-cha, Santana filtered Puente's Spanish Caribbean sensibilities through his own deep knowledge of U.S. rock, which he had become familiar with not in the United States but in his Mexican homeland, where young people had embraced rock since the 1950s.[1] In 2000, National Public Radio's *All Things Considered* named "Oye Como Va!" one of the one hundred

most important American songs of the twentieth century, a decision based on its profound influence on musical developments in the United States.[2] Ironically, then, it was an immigrant Mexican rocker who, in pioneering the subgenre of Latin rock, introduced the U.S.-born Puente's Afro-Cuban dance music to mainstream U.S. rock audiences. This single example of multiple origins and intersecting pathways brings into focus a characteristic of U.S. Latino musical practices: Far from being defined by or limited to musical aesthetics associated with particular national groups, Latino music making has always entailed crossing musical, geographic, racial, and ethnic boundaries. The result has been a dazzling variety of musical practices—many of them not usually identified as Latino—each with its own intricate genealogy and each giving voice to the quintessentially blended and layered qualities that characterize the experience of being Latino in the United States. (Throughout this book, I use the term "Latino" for individuals of both genders with some degree of Latin American ancestry who live permanently in the United States. I use the combination "Latin/o American" to refer collectively to U.S. Latinos and Latin Americans and their musics. Only occasionally—where it is necessary to include gender specificity—do I use the term "Latino/a," since consistent gendering of the full term ["Latin/o/a American"] would be likely to confuse rather than to inform.)

As this book demonstrates, if we heed Puente's call to listen up, if we pay close attention to the mix of styles and inflections embedded in the 1963 and 1970 versions of "Oye Como Va!" we can hear not only the tumultuous social and cultural rumblings that characterized the 1960s but also their echoes, which are still resonating in the extraordinary assortment of blended sounds—from Latin freestyle to hip-hop to *reggaeton*—created by U.S.-born Latinos in subsequent decades. More recent waves of immigrants have further enriched the Latino musical mosaic of the United States, adding such Latin American styles as merengue, *bachata, banda, cumbia,* and *vallenato,* which have been resignified and transformed in the United States as their newcomer performers—and now their children—negotiate their lives, identities, and musical practices in an increasingly interconnected transnational world. All these styles produced and consumed in the United States articulate the multiple dimensions of Latinos' constant but ever-shifting engagements with both U.S. mainstream and Latin American culture.

Within the United States, musical dialogues have also been taking place between established U.S. Latinos and their more recently arrived counterparts. These dialogues have been filtered and modulated by a characteristic common to both groups: a shared history of, and openness to, musical (and other sorts of) blending. The musical hybridity characterizing Puente's and Santana's versions of "Oye Como Va!" was, in fact, nothing new: The styles

Puente brought together in this song—mambo and cha-cha—and Santana's rock were themselves hybrid styles, as were their antecedent genres, Afro-Cuban *son* and *danzón* and African American rhythm and blues, respectively. Indeed, the genealogies of all these musics reach back into the post-Columbian period, when native, European, and African cultures first came into contact, initiating processes of musical exchange, blending, and hybridity that are still ongoing. Moreover, as Latinos, Puente and Santana were themselves the products of biological and cultural mixture, which continues to be a hallmark of Latino lives and identities.

It is important to emphasize that nothing is exceptional about Latin/o American hybridity: The United States has a similar history of racial and cultural blending (as do many other nations around the globe), although a willingness to acknowledge, explore, and celebrate it has been far more pronounced among Latin/o Americans than among non-Latinos. As I discuss further below, because Latinos themselves, as well as their cultural productions, have so often defied the neatly bounded categories characterizing the United States' bipolar racial imaginary, they have sometimes been perceived by their non-Latino counterparts with misunderstanding, anxiety, and fear, a potent combination whose effects have hampered the efforts of Latinos to claim full cultural citizenship. Collectively, the chapters in this volume illuminate the many ways that hybridity, *mestizaje* (racial and cultural mixture), transnationalism, globalization, and border crossings of all sorts have both underpinned and pinned down Latino musical practices.

The Politics of Hybridity and Mestizaje in Historical Perspective

The assertion that racial and cultural mixture has shaped the contours of U.S. Latino musical practices might appear to be obvious and uncontroversial, but, in the context of the United States' racial formations and racial imaginaries, it is not: In the United States, the very *idea* of racial mixing and its consequent ambiguities have a long history of generating deeply rooted anxieties about boundaries, sexuality, and the body. To the colonial British and their descendants, racial mixture was believed to produce physical and cultural degeneracy, and the result was fear, loathing, and a history of well-documented aggression against people of Latin American descent. Latin Americans' mix of Amerindian and African blood was considered to be the primary source of their inferiority, although even their European ancestors—the Spanish—were believed to be similarly afflicted with problematic genetic predispositions to treachery and violence as well as to other vices, such as

indolence, irrationality, and sexual promiscuity. Images of Spanish cruelty and ruthlessness became entrenched in the English imagination in the sixteenth century, after Spanish writers such as Bartolomé de las Casas published treatises decrying the abysmal treatment of the natives; these images were perpetuated during England's ongoing rivalry and wars with Spain in subsequent centuries. The Spaniards, who also believed in the inherent inferiority of natives (and Africans), amply deserved the criticism for their treatment of the natives, but the English, who failed to conjure up the same level of outrage when similar and worse treatment decimated the natives in their own colonies, passed these beliefs about the essentially violent and irrational nature of the Spanish temperament down to their post-colonial-era successors. Negative images of the Spanish were only worsened in the aftermath of the racial and cultural mixture taking place between Spaniards, Africans, and natives throughout Latin America in subsequent centuries—especially during the 1898 Spanish-American War. Indeed, these ideas are alive and well in the work of Samuel Huntington and Lawrence Harrison, who continue to argue that Latin Americans are inherently inferior to Anglo-Americans, although they are careful to ascribe this inferiority to Latin American culture rather than genetics.[3]

Racial mixture, of course, is not unique to the American hemisphere: Genetic studies have demonstrated beyond a doubt that no races are "pure" and that racial mixture is universal.[4] The universality of race mixture on a genetic level, however, cannot and should not be interpreted to mean that it should be considered a neutral phenomenon lacking local significance or disconnected from structural hierarchies. On the contrary, in terms of the quality of life of people throughout the Americas, mixed-race individuals have historically had fewer rights and privileges than Continental Spaniards and other Europeans, although they consistently enjoyed higher status than "unmixed" Amerindians and Africans. Moreover, some mixtures have always been more privileged than others, and, as this book demonstrates, these hierarchies are very visible in the ways Latin/o American popular musics have been produced, consumed, and valued in Latin America as well as in the United States.

Beliefs about the nature and meaning of mixing are also deeply embedded in the language used to describe it. In the colonial period, despite official Spanish concerns about maintaining *pureza de sangre* (purity of blood), miscegenation, whether coerced or voluntary, routinely took place between Europeans, natives, and Africans. (And it is worth remembering that each of these commonly used geo-racial categories referred to peoples who were themselves genetically and culturally mixed.) In Latin America, the term "mestizo" emerged to describe people and culture of mixed European and

native ancestry; the related term "mestizaje" has commonly been used to refer to the process of cultural mixing that accompanied biological mixing. Because these terms are based on the Spanish verb "mezclar" (to mix), in principle they can refer to people and culture of mixed European and African ancestries as well, but in practice they are generally used to describe European/native hybridity. The analogous term describing the descendants of a European/African mix—"mulatto"—is less commonly used and then only to describe people; references to "mulatto culture" are rare. In the Spanish Caribbean, which received hundreds of thousands of enslaved Africans in the colonial period,[5] African/European cultural hybridity is more often described with the term "creole," which signals the mixtures produced in the Americas in the wake of European conquest, colonization, and slavery, but without explicit reference to race.[6] While by definition the terms "creole" and "creolization" can refer to the same sort of blendings as the terms "mestizo" and "mestizaje," the former are seldom if ever employed in (or for) regions where the European/native mix predominates, and the contrary is also true: The term "mestizo" is seldom used for mixed-race people and their blended cultural forms in regions of Latin America where a European/African mix predominates.[7]

In areas of North America occupied by the English, sexual relations between Europeans and natives did take place and produce progeny, but, with the exception of the derogatory term "half-breed," a named *category* for mixed people and culture analogous to the word "mestizo" did not enter the American English lexicon—indeed, as this chapter demonstrates, the Spanish term continues to be the only one available. (The term "mixed race" is not analogous to the term "mestizo," as it includes mixtures of any racial groups and is not specific to the Americas.) As for people of mixed African and European ancestry in the United States, it was again a Spanish term—"mulatto"—that was adopted, although more specific terms, such as "quadroon" and "octoroon," were generated in order to specify the proportion and type of racial mixture, or "blood quantum mixture," between blacks, whites, and natives. By the beginning of the twentieth century, these distinctions became irrelevant: All children of unions of Europeans and Afrodescendants in the United States were assigned to the "black" category regardless of an individual's degree of white blood and phenotypical characteristics (the "one drop" rule), creating a bipolar construction of race in the United States that is often contrasted with Latin America's more flexible (if still highly problematic) constructions of race and racial identity.[8]

The existence of a large and publicly acknowledged mixed-race category in Spanish America—and its corresponding absence in the United States—underpins a profound cultural difference between the ways Spanish- and

English-speaking Americans have identified themselves. Latin/o Americans recognize themselves and their cultures as the products of the region's history of racial and cultural mixture; in the United States, in contrast, racial and cultural identities have historically been imagined in binary terms—that is, as black or white. Such binary thinking about race has been changing in recent years as a result of immigration as well as the growing population of bi- or multiracial people, including such high-profile individuals as Barack Obama and Tiger Woods, who publicly embrace their hybridity. The steady stream of newspaper articles and television segments asking the question "Is Obama black?" during the 2008 election season, however, demonstrates the depth of discomfort generated by these new challenges to historical paradigms of racial identity.

Unsurprisingly, given these fundamental conceptual differences, discourses regarding cultural hybridity in (and about) the United States have been markedly different from those employed in (and about) Latin America. Scholars and other observers of Latin American music and culture routinely refer to the biological and cultural mixing that originally produced and shaped them, often employing the concept of mestizaje to analyze cultural and musical developments, particularly in areas with predominantly mestizo populations; in areas whose populations are predominantly of African descent, the terms "creolization" or "syncretism" are used. In the United States, in contrast, where anxieties about racial and cultural mixing persist, bipolar racial imaginaries still generate much of the language used to describe popular music, such as the widely (if controversially) used term "black music" to describe the musics associated with African American communities (most, if not all, of which are, to some degree, the product of cultural mixture).[9]

Musics associated with Latinos, however, regardless of the nature and degree of their racial and cultural mixture, have not generated analogous terms capturing the nature and nuances of their hybridity—and, as I have argued elsewhere, the terms "Latin music" and "Latino music" are highly imperfect substitutes.[10] Indeed, the language of mestizaje seems to drop out of the lexicon when musics of Latin American origins arrive in the United States and musical borrowings occur within and across racial and ethnic boundaries. Rather than generating a term allowing for the transformation and blending of both parties involved in a transaction, such terms as "borrowings," "influences," and "tinges" emphasize the degree of discreteness between the cultural domains of donor and receiver. One noticeable exception is the work of George Lipsitz (following the work of anthropologist Michael M. Fisher), which has effectively employed the postmodern concepts of "bifocality or reciprocity of perspectives, juxtaposition of multiple realities—intertextuality, inter-referentiality, and comparisons through families of resemblance" to

describe the hybridity of Chicano musical practices.[11] But as Raquel Z. Rivera has noted, many U.S. scholars and other cultural observers still employ the prism of assimilation to interpret Latino musical practices, viewing Puerto Rican rappers, for example, as imitating African American culture but seldom recognizing that African American culture shares with Puerto Ricans a similar diasporic heritage—or that African American culture itself is also similarly hybrid.[12] In short, Latino hybridity has been marked by being linguistically unnamed and thus out of place and profoundly "othered."

As the chapters in this book collectively demonstrate, the disavowal of racial and cultural mixture in the United States has been a powerful challenge to Latinos' popular music practices because it has excluded them from musical domains perceived in binary terms, such as "black" (e.g., R & B, hip-hop) and "white" (e.g., rock or pop). As Rivera has noted, even phenotypically black Latinos have been excluded from the "black" category because they are members of a group—Latinos—recognized as mixed.[13] Mexican mestizos in the United States have similarly found themselves relegated to an unstable position between the "white" and "black" categories.

If the scholarship on racial, cultural, and musical hybridity in Latin America provides those analyzing U.S. Latino musical practices with useful theoretical models, it is also important to keep in mind that the concept of mestizaje is still highly problematic because of its long history of being misused. Indeed, contemporary scholars of race relations in Latin America, such as George Reid Andrews, Helen Safa, Peter Wade, Miriam Jiménez Román, Anani Dzidzienyo, and Suzanne Oboler, have critiqued, if not roundly condemned, the concept of mestizaje because of its veiled implications and noxious consequences.[14] They rightly charge, for example, that the implicit equation of mestizaje's hybridity with equality—that is, "we are all mixed so we are all equal"—has long been used in Latin America to avoid facing (and altering) the social, economic, and political structures responsible for perpetuating race-based "pigmentocracies," in which white-skinned individuals enjoy privileges of every sort; mixed-race people occupy an intermediate space depending on such variables as their phenotypical proximity to whiteness, education, wealth, and so forth; and people of more unambiguously African or native ancestry are subject to subordination and exploitation of all sorts. Wade, for example, has demonstrated how, in the 1940s, Colombia's elites celebrated mestizaje as a strategy for imposing a unified national identity on a country deeply segmented by culturally diverse and highly independent regions. To symbolize national unity amid this diversity, they elevated the tri-ethnic cumbia—whose mixture of African, native, and European sensibilities was heralded as the sonic embodiment of the nation's mestizo identity—although not before "whitening" it by stripping it of its more

audible signs of African and Amerindian origins, thereby confirming rather than upending long-standing racial hierarchies.[15] Jiménez Román has also pointed to the pernicious subtext underlying celebrations of mestizaje, which imply that those who are *not* mixed or who choose not to identify as mixed are problematic, "that the parts themselves—and those who embody less than the ideal mixture, are somehow deficient."[16] The insidious relationship between the Latin American concept of mestizaje and the concept of *blanqueamiento,* or whitening—racial mixing whose goal is to "improve" native and Afrodescendant populations and cultures by diluting them with "white" blood—has also been exposed. These concerns have understandably generated fears of slippages between notions of mestizaje and the (more recent) notion of "colorblindness," which similarly uses the realities of racial mixture to deny racism and its structural manifestations. Critical race theorist Ian Haney Lopez, for example, has argued that celebrations of Latinos' mestizaje as (presumably) ushering in a postracial society in which color does not matter perniciously serve to justify efforts to dismantle hard-fought race-sensitive policies designed to rectify long-standing social inequalities.[17]

Having made similar critiques of mestizaje himself, however, Wade has also proposed that, to many Latin Americans, mestizaje is more than an ideological construct whose purpose is to submerge racial and social divisions in the name of nation building or to preserve entrenched privileges. He argues that, for people of varying degrees of racial mixture, mestizaje is a lived experience and an *idea* that offers them different possibilities for self-identification, because by definition the concept depends on the presence of and interactions between its constituent parts—blackness, indigenousness, and whiteness—and therefore creates space for individuals to assert their blackness and/or indigenousness *within* the space of mestizaje. According to Wade, "Nationalist ideologies of mestizaje contain and encompass dynamics not only of homogenization but also of differentiation, maintaining permanent spaces of a particular kind, for blackness and indigenousness, and creating a mosaic image of national identity."[18] Jacques Audinet has similarly recognized the pernicious way "mestizaje" has been used. However, he emphasizes the term's potential for analyzing creative developments, noting that "mestizaje" can be useful for describing and conceptualizing "how encounters between distinct groups and their cultures are brought about"[19] and for understanding how the outcome of such exchanges can produce "a new language, a new experience, a new relation . . . something in which both protagonists will recognize themselves and, at the same time, something totally new compared to each other."[20]

In short, our task is to remain vigilant regarding the racist ways the concept of mestizaje has been used, while at the same time recognizing and

celebrating the extent to which the experiences of Latinos living in the United States have been shaped by racial, ethnic, and cultural mixture. Despite—and sometimes because of—their interstitial position within the United States' racial imaginary, Latinos' personal and collective hybrid genealogies have served to facilitate the bridging and crossing of musical borders. Indeed, Latinos have generated an extraordinary variety of innovative blends of Latin American, African American, and Euro-American aesthetics, bringing them into dialogue with each other in multiple overlapping and intersecting ways. Puente's and Santana's versions of "Oye Como Va!" are but two well-known examples; this book examines many others.

Mapping Mestizaje onto Latino Musical Production

If the concepts of hybridity and mestizaje can be useful for thinking about the complexities of U.S. Latino identities and cultural productions, they also present problems, because the concept of mestizaje, as well as its critiques, do not always map neatly onto the domain of music. Jiménez Román, who rightly criticizes mestizaje's role in perpetuating racial inequalities in Latin America, observes that attempts to identify an individual's constituent parts account for the "assiduous attention paid to the phenotypical details that 'expose' African 'genes' and for the elaborate vocabulary that at once confers privilege and derides the subject under scrutiny. The conceptual difference between 'high yellow' and '*grifa*' [both terms for a lighter shade of skin color] is truly insignificant and responds to the same historical privileging of certain physical characteristics over others."[21] Jiménez Román's critique of efforts to identify the specific origins of an individual's phenotype is absolutely valid in the situation she describes, but it does not easily correspond to the domain of culture and to situations in which scholars seek to identify the constituent roots of Latino musical practices. Identifying the origins of African-derived drumming patterns in a particular style of Latino music, for example, does not have the same implications as trying to identify the origins of an individual's particular hue of skin—not to mention that the musicians performing such music may be white or light-skinned (as was Tito Puente). It is also noteworthy that scholarly interest in constituent roots has not been uniform regarding musics of African and native derivation. The contributions of African-derived aesthetics to Latin/o American popular musics, such as merengue and salsa, among others, have been widely recognized and deconstructed, but, as I discuss further in Chapter 6, comparable contributions of native derivation to musics such as cumbia, while implied by the term "mestizaje," have seldom been sought as explicitly or as thoroughly.

Moreover, the constant aesthetic blending that has always characterized

Latin/o American musical practices simply cannot be equated with the racist desires for genetic mixing, whose goal is to "improve the race" through blanqueamiento. This is not to deny that correspondences exist between the problematic concepts of hybridity embedded within nationalist ideologies of mestizaje and the pernicious effects of racism in the domain of popular music. If quintessentially hybrid musics originating in Latin America, such as Cuban son, Dominican merengue, and Colombian cumbia, have become much celebrated symbols of national identity precisely because they are perceived as expressing the (literally and figuratively) harmonious outcome of racial and cultural blending (notwithstanding persistent racially organized social hierarchies), musics of unambiguously African and native origins have never had the same access to and success within the popular music marketplace as their more audibly hybrid counterparts.

Nonetheless, unlike social structures in which proximity to the ideal of phenotypical whiteness and Eurocentric culture that have historically shaped (and improved) an individual's or group's life chances, the most culturally *and* economically significant popular musics have emerged from the poorest, most dispossessed—and often the darkest—social sectors in Latin/o America: Cuban son, New York salsa, and Dominican bachata are but three examples.[22] To be sure, before such grassroots styles could be accepted in more bourgeois settings, they underwent stylistic changes that distanced them from their lower-class (and more racially marked) versions, through a process of musical "whitening" in which musical aesthetics deemed too "black" were reduced or eliminated. But as the extraordinary cultural influence of musics originating in communities of color—such as the Afro-Cuban mambo and contemporary reggaeton—demonstrate, some of the most successful musical blendings have flourished not due to "whitening" but rather to their strongly audible grounding in Afro-Latin aesthetics.

The fact that in the United States most musical styles have been unambiguously associated with one racial category or another, however, has left little space for those multiracial, bicultural Latinos comfortable with and interested in aesthetic bridging rather than having to choose one identity or the other in order to succeed. Historically, Latinos who could "pass" as white could access the mainstream market, although only if they hid their ethnicity by changing their names, as did Andy Russell and Ritchie Valens, respectively born Andrés Rábago Pérez and Ricardo Valenzuela. In contrast, Afrodescendant Latinos who were phenotypically indistinguishable from African Americans had access to the "black" segment of the market, as did, for example, the Puerto Rican singer Herman Santiago in the doo-wop group Frankie Lymon and the Teenagers, which was identified as African American. More recently, Puerto Ricans Fat Joe and Big Pun began their careers in rap

at a moment when it was perceived exclusively as a "black" music; only later, in the late 1990s, when hip-hop began to be more widely acknowledged as a "ghettocentric" music that included Puerto Ricans, did these musicians begin to identify themselves as Puerto Ricans by employing Spanish lyrics and cover art iconography such as images of the Puerto Rican flag.[23]

In contrast, Latinos of all racial backgrounds and national origins who would not or could not relinquish their cultural hybridity and layered identities found themselves facing symbolic dangers and practical consequences. The nature and degree of the outcomes have varied according to local conditions and timing, in dialogue with larger national trends; these are the subject of Chapter 3, which compares East and West Coast Latino rock 'n' roll in an era of intensifying cultural nationalism and identity politics, and Chapter 4, which extends the discussion to turntable-based musical practices in the 1980s and beyond. These twinned essays explore the many ways Latinos born and raised in the United States have resisted the boundaries of the country's black and white–only categories, freely choosing musical sources and styles from among the wide array of possibilities offered by the nation's rich cultural demographics and making them their own. Non-Latinos have often perceived such efforts as second-rate imitations by cultural outsiders and interlopers rather than as natural expressions of bicultural Latino identities. Latinos themselves have often rejected such engagements as signs of cultural loss and betrayal. In contrast, for those who have grown up familiar and comfortable with hybridity and who welcome its freedom to create new sounds and images, such blendings articulate essential components of Latinos' rich cultural and musical genealogies.

Border Crossing and Musical Hybridity in the Era of Transnationalism

The hybridity of Latino identities, expressed in an uninterrupted history of musical blending and aesthetic border crossings, has been further complicated by social processes originally set in motion in the 1960s but that coalesced in the 1980s: economic globalization and increasing waves of immigration from throughout Latin America facilitated by the family reunification provisions of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965. In contrast to earlier immigrants, the post-1980s arrivals found themselves able, because of improved telecommunications and increasingly globalized economies, to participate simultaneously in their host and homeland cultures, including their musical practices. Scholars of transnationalism have observed that immigrants' adherence to Latin American ways of doing things has been

strengthened by their ability to recreate them here, in constant dialogue with developments back home.[24] The ramifications of the new waves of immigration on the U.S. Latino popular music landscape are explored in Chapters 5 and 6, particularly the extent to which the "here and there" patterns of transnational life and identity formation have added additional layers to the already complex hybridity of U.S. Latino musical practices.

Compared to their predecessors, many newer immigrants, especially those living within large ethnic enclaves in cities such as Los Angeles and New York, have been relatively insulated from U.S. mainstream culture.[25] Their musical practices, however, also reveal rich dialogues with well-established bilingual, bicultural Latinos born and raised in the United States, whose musical sensibilities have been shaped less by their connections to Latin America than by their locations within the United States' extraordinarily diverse (if hierarchical) cultural landscape. Indeed, one major difference between the two groups is that the musical exchanges of more well-established Latinos have been particularly active with African American culture—the result of years of sharing the experiences and spaces of social, economic, and political marginality. The Dominican immigrants who are the subjects of Chapter 5 provide a particularly salient case study of how transnational musical practices have intersected with and complicated existing bicultural U.S. Latino musical practices with additional layerings, particularly in the domain of hip-hop. The mixed, layered, and segmented nature of U.S.-based Dominican identities and their musical expressions—merengue, bachata, merengue *típico, palo,* and, more recently, the quintessentially hybrid reggaeton—also illustrate the degree to which transnational cultural fields are sensitive to the nuances of chronology, locality, and racial identity.

The intersections between hybridity, mestizaje, and transnationalism are explored further in Chapter 6, which focuses on Colombians and the musical styles most widely associated with Colombia—cumbia and its close relative, vallenato. Originally an expression of the tri-ethnic culture characterizing the northern coast of Colombia, cumbia has spread throughout Latin/o America, most notably to those regions where mestizos rather than Afrodescendants are predominant, such as Mexico and Peru. Along the way, cumbia has been locally resignified as an expression and symbol of mestizo working-class identity. These changes have become particularly audible in the United States, where Mexican-style cumbia has become the soundtrack for working-class Mexican immigrants' transnational lives but, interestingly, not for Colombian immigrants. Cumbia's recent appearance in trendy dance scenes around the globe, disconnected from any particular immigrant group, represents an additional twist to cumbia's long history of travel and transformation.

Hybridity in the Latin/o Popular Music Marketplace

Santana enjoyed far greater success with his 1970 rock version of "Oye Como Va!" than Puente had with his 1963 Spanish Caribbean version, demonstrating that not all blends fare equally in the marketplace; location and timing have also been crucial to commercial success. The dynamic blend of Spanish Caribbean sonorities and African American R & B rhythms characteristic of mid-1960s New York boogaloo, for example, might have enjoyed more commercial longevity within that city's Puerto Rican community had it not emerged at the onset of an era defined by cultural nationalism and identity politics that favored the more unambiguously Latin/o American salsa. But by far the most crucial factor determining the commercial success of Latino popular musics in the United States has been their unstable location within an industry that has insisted on defining and containing musicians and audiences within unambiguous racial and ethnic categories. In the United States, musics associated with either whites or blacks have historically been marketed separately;[26] "ethnic" musics, in contrast, were marketed to particular immigrant groups. As long as Latino musics and musicians did not cross the boundaries of these ethnically or racially defined categories, industry personnel, non-Latino and Latino alike, could promote their musics to segments of the population perceived to be their "natural" audience. This was true of both the mainstream English-language popular music business and the Spanish-language "Latin" music business, each of which operated with its own fixed ideas of what U.S. Latino musical practices and preferences should be. In Chapter 2, I survey crucial historical developments in these two sometimes independent, sometimes intersecting sectors of the music business, demonstrating how Latinos' layered identities and musical practices have always rattled an industry loathe to deal with the ambiguity of hybridity.

Chapter 7 extends my analysis of how ethnicity has shaped the Latin/o American music business in the contemporary era, in which new layers have been added to U.S. Latino cultural geography by large-scale immigration from Latin America, further complicating the media's historically imperfect and unstable constructions of what the musical practices of Latinos are or should be. As anthropologist Arlene Dávila has noted, in recent years the mass media have "Latin Americanized" the concept *latinidad* itself—what it means to be Latino/a—by emphasizing Spanish-language and Latin American roots at the expense of the bicultural and bilingual realities of U.S.-born Latinos.[27] Given the power of the media's image-making machinery to define Latino communities, their identities, and their social locations within the

nation, the music industry's responses to these shifts in the cultural terrain in the next decades call for even more careful listening and watching.

In summary, although I frame the contents of this book around the theme of hybridity, it is not intended to deny the problematic ways mestizaje and other terms for racial and cultural hybridity have been used in the past or to obscure the ways they can still be misused to mask persistent social inequalities. I do, however, insist that Latino voices be heard and appreciated on their own terms, which means fully understanding their long and rich history of racial and cultural mixture. If we listen up, as Puente and Santana encourage us to do in their own idiomatic ways, we can distinguish in these sounds the rich interplay between the pressures and the pleasures, the conflicts and the celebration of these ongoing musical and cultural dialogues that have been taking place among Latinos as well as with the larger multicultural society in which we live. *Oye Como Va!*