

Latinos in the Garage: A Genealogical Examination of the Latino/a Presence and Influence in Garage Rock (and Rock and Pop Music)¹

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In this article the author explores some of the Latino/a cultural dimensions related to the emergence of garage rock in the mid-1960s. Using a genealogical method, this research illuminates the significant Latino/a presence and influence in early rock and roll music and disrupts common dichotomous black/white constructions of rock music and popular music in general. By further articulating garage rock to Latino/a identity issues, the author makes a case for recognizing Latino/as as part of mainstream US culture and also applies these insights in an analysis of recent issues related to the place of Latino/as in contemporary US society.

Latino/as,² Popular Music, and Identity

With regard to popular music, the year 1999 will be remembered by many writers, critics, media experts, and fans as “the year of Ricky Martin” after his phenomenal success at the Grammy Awards (Bento; “Ricky Martin”). It may be more accurate to call it “the year of the Latino” in recognition of other popular Latino/a artists who enjoyed success in mainstream US culture. Ricky Martin only led the pack, as he was quickly followed by Enrique Iglesias (the son of international star Julio Iglesias), Marc Anthony, Lou Bega, Christina Aguilera, and Jennifer Lopez, who all achieved unprecedented chart success in the US pop charts all within a matter of a few months to a year.³ Around the same time, rocker Carlos Santana once again achieved major chart success with the 1999 Arista release of *Supernatural* and was hailed by music critics, winning several Grammy awards and tying Grammy records previously held by pop culture icon Michael Jackson (Granados). While other references included the “Latin explosion,” the “Latino pop phenomenon,” the “Latin music craze,” and the “Latin(o) music boom” (Cepeda; Ehrenreich; Roberts; Roiz), it seems fair to say that

Latino/a artists were a common presence in the US popular culture mainstream, and, in fact, that the presence of Latina/os in US popular culture seemed to reach significant and perhaps unprecedented proportions.

In addition to the many awards won by Latina/os in 1999 and 2000, Latina/o artists performed in the Super Bowl, at the Republican National Convention, and at President Bush's inauguration (Bender). People might also have noticed the images of *rock en español* bands on bags of Doritos chips, another *rock en español* band's music as the soundtrack for Coors Light beer commercials during *Monday Night Football* broadcasts, and still others as background music for Levi's jeans commercials aired during the Super Bowl and otherwise regularly on network television. In recent years, Colombian pop/rock star Shakira could be seen in as many Pepsi commercials as MTV music videos and was being touted by the music industry as "the next Madonna" (Martin). As a result of these and other cultural shifts, such as 2000 US Census data revealing the emergence of Latinos/Hispanics⁴ as the largest minority group in the United States, Latina/o cultures in contemporary times are opening up new areas increasingly worthy of scholarly investigation.

Worth noting is the fact that although the latest US Census revealed that Latino/as are now the largest minority group, the news came on the heels of a decade of controversy for Latino/as. From legacies of racism and ethnocentrism to controversial proposals like California's Proposition 187, which sought to eliminate social services for undocumented immigrants based on their undocumented status,⁵ from complicated social issues like affirmative action to heated "English-only" debates, and most recently, from increasing immigration from Latin America to rampant xenophobia and anti-foreigner sentiment after September 11, 2001, the rising tide of the Latino/a demographic in the United States must be further contextualized through a consideration of complex social issues. In other words, a correlate can be proposed here that while scholars recognize that Latino/as are now more visible than ever in mainstream US culture, the supposed emergence of Latino/as in popular music is an issue that provides insight into contemporary issues in politics and relevant societal questions and, as I argue here, provides further insight into questions of cultural identity.

All of this establishes the rationale for this research and the questions that follow: What else can be gleaned from the notable presence of Latino/as in US popular culture? Can Latino/as in popular music aid in better understanding Latino/as, Latino/a identity, or, perhaps, the complications of Latino/a identity discourse(s)? In short, one of the aims of this article is to reveal that popular music should not be dismissed as just popular music but is, in fact, an important cultural site of discourse, debate, and conflict. Thus, a premise of this research is that some of the tensions and complications of Latino/a identity are articulated in media and popular culture. At the same time, some further qualifications are warranted regarding the connections between Latino/as, popular music, and identity questions.

Given the range of possibilities available to Latino/as in language use (speaking Spanish, speaking English, bilingualism, code-switching, etc.), assimilation (joining

the dominant culture, retaining ethnic identities, hybrid identities, etc.), and other identity questions (arguments related to choosing identity according to government classifications), and with the notable rise in the Latino/a population in the United States as well as impossible-to-determine statistics on illegal immigration, Latino/as comprise a significant group for understanding United States culture in the present as well as in the near future. As Johnson notes on the significance of such understanding, “Recognition of [the need to understand Latino/as] by Anglos and Hispanics alike is necessary for informed thinking about multicultural communication in a society of increasing multiethnicity” (196). How, then, can a study of Latino/as and garage rock contribute to such understanding? It is my contention that the prominence of British and Anglo-American garage-rock bands in common discourse on garage rock reflects a wider Anglo-centric view of rock history (and popular music history) where Brits and Anglo-Americans figure most often and most prominently, at the expense of a wider class-based association that included various ethnic strains such as US-based Latino/Hispanic contributions.

In this article, I am interested in joining those scholars who have been concerned with exploring some of the identity-related dimensions of popular (rock) music and, specifically, how ethnic identities have influenced the production and consumption of rock music (Avant-Mier; Billig; Lipsitz *Time Passages*; Reyes and Waldman; Stratton). More specifically, this article disrupts common understandings of garage rock and remaps the history of garage rock through a cultural lens that has Latino/Hispanic artists as its focus. In order to accomplish this task, this article follows a genealogical approach (Foucault), tracing the significance of Latino/Hispanic artists in the pre-garage-rock era. What follows is a discussion of several different Latino/a contributions to the garage-rock phenomenon that place Latino/as and Latino/a issues at the center of some of the most important and memorable garage rock-compositions. Finally, this article explores some of the ideological implications of excluding the highly significant contributions of minority groups and maintaining an Anglo-centric history of rock and roll. The purpose of this article therefore is: (1) to establish a Foucauldian genealogical link with Latinos/Hispanics that extends the understanding of garage rock with a perspective that features the contributions of Latino/as and Hispanics; (2) to problematize the aforementioned notion of a recent Latin explosion or “boom”; and therefore (3) to extend analysis of popular music as a mode of intercultural discourse between minority groups and mainstream society in the United States.

Background

The recent 2001 Rhino Records CD box set titled *Nuggets II: Original Artyfacts from the British Empire and Beyond, 1964–1969* was devoted to the project of uncovering the forgotten, obscure, unknown, and underground history of garage rock. In what was obviously a monumental project of collecting and documenting obscure garage-rock histories, the producers of this collection were hip enough to the reality that

garage rock was a worldwide phenomenon. As such, the collection included tracks from various international garage-rock bands of the 1960s. Of salience for this article, the collection includes some Latino/a groups and artists such as Los Bravos, a group from Spain that struck gold in 1966 with “Black Is Black,” which made the Top 5 in both England and the United States⁶ and had other minor hits such as “Bring a Little Lovin’” and “Going Nowhere” (*Nuggets II* 14, 36); We All Together, a Peruvian garage band (38); Los Chihuas, a group from northern Mexico that *Nuggets II* calls “disciplined garage-psych” (17, 63); Los Shakers, a “towering presence” from Uruguay and Argentina (17–18, 82); and the Brazilian band Os Mutantes, known for psychedelic music, controversy, and “risk-taking” (18, 86–87) as well as for their later influence on the alternative rock scene in the 1990s through artists like Nirvana, Beck, the Beastie Boys, David Byrne, Stereolab, Portastatic, Superchunk, and Yo La Tengo (Harvey).

Other Latin American garage bands not included in *Nuggets II* include Los Mockers, a band from Uruguay whose records are sought by collectors for being among the best garage groups of the 1960s, and Los Cheyenes, another group from Spain who remained unknown, perhaps because of their insistence on singing in Spanish. Unfortunately, with regard to their inclusion of a few Spanish, Brazilian, and “Latin” bands in garage-rock history, the *Nuggets II* producers relied on a mostly international view of garage-rock obscurities and forgotten moments. What was lost in this collection is the international and intercultural flavor of the forgotten contributions by domestic (i.e. US-based) Latino/Hispanic garage-rock bands and artists who are of great significance for the garage-rock era.

On the contrary, the original 1998 *Nuggets* collection actually does mention some US Latino/as in “garage” and “proto-punk” bands from the period of 1964 to 1968, although it seems to include these as mere footnotes. Amongst others from the first *Nuggets* compilation, one might note Dave Aguilar of the Chocolate Watchband (*Nuggets* 50); Bob Alaniz of the Kim Fowley band (53); Bob Gonzalez, who was a founding member of the Syndicate of Sound (60), yet another band from San Jose, California;⁷ Bobby Cortez, drummer for the Groupies (69); Billy Garcia and Danny Garcia, guitarist and bassist (respectively) of the Lyrics (70); and John Lopez, guitarist and vocalist for the Zakary Thaks (89). Likewise, the original *Nuggets* collection goes beyond individuals and actually includes entire bands that revealed more Latino/a influence than the mere existence of a Spanish surname on the band’s roster. In this list one can note bands such as the Premiers, a band that cracked the Top 20 in 1964 with “Farmer John”,⁸ Sam the Sham & the Pharaohs, who had a top hit with the unforgettable garage-rock/frat-rock classic “Wooly Bully” in 1965;⁹ and the Sir Douglas Quintet, who scored a hit with “She’s About a Mover” in 1965.¹⁰

My focus here centers on the last few garage bands mentioned here—as well as one that seems conspicuously absent—in order to develop my argument that some of the most important garage-rock songs were related to, inspired by, or composed by Latino/a as who faced complex identity questions. Moreover, the Latino/Hispanic presence and influence continues through less obvious connections such as the “Bo Diddley” beat in

“I Want Candy” by the Strangeloves, the (in)famous “Louie Louie,” and other garage-rock classics. As stated above, this article will address the relatively unknown Latino/a connections to garage rock and, by extension, to rock music history.

From Early Latin Rock to “Ritchie Valens”

In addition to his contributions to understanding rock and roll as a profoundly working-class phenomenon, George Lipsitz has also explored some of the Latino/Chicano connections to rock history (Lipsitz “Dangerous”; Lipsitz “Rainbow”; Lipsitz “Time”). As Lipsitz and others note, the intercultural influence amongst African Americans, Anglo Americans, Latino/as, and others in Los Angeles was visible by 1952. Early Latino/a influence was witnessed when black saxophonist Chuck Higgins from LA’s east side recorded a saxophone instrumental called “Pachuco Hop” (Guevara 117; Loza 81; Reyes and Waldman 12–14), a reference to the *pachuco* (zoot-suiter) subculture of the 1940s that remained popular among Latinos and Hispanics in many big cities. Along with Higgins and others like Big Jay McNeely, there were several other R&B artists and musicians who were able to tour regularly and make a life playing music, primarily by working steady gigs for Mexican-American and Chicano/a audiences in the southern California region. Scholars note that many of these musicians acknowledge a huge debt to the Chicano/a audience that helped R&B come into being in southern California, and, along with other streams, R&B eventually helped to establish the rock and roll scene in LA (Garcia; Macías; Reyes and Waldman).

Broadening the evidence of Latin connections to rock and roll, a direct line of Latin influence on R&B can be identified in the music of Antoine “Fats” Domino, who himself was influenced by the pianist “Professor Longhair” (also known as Roy Byrd), from New Orleans. In describing his particular style, Professor Longhair acknowledged Spanish beats, *calypso* downbeats, *rumba* and *mambo* (Roberts). Through Fats Domino, Roy Byrd’s Latinized piano rhythms had become part of mainstream rock and roll during the 1950s (Palmer; Roberts). Roberts contends that such a Latin tinge was also evident in other early 1950s R&B hits like Ruth Brown’s “Mambo Baby,” Lavern Baker’s “Tweedle Dee,” Lloyd Glenn’s “Old Time Shuffle Blues,” the Coasters’ “Down in Mexico” and “Loop the Loop Mambo” (Roberts 136–37), and, of course, Bo Diddley’s hits like “I’m a Man” and “Bo Diddley,” which will be discussed further below. In 1954 the flipside of the hit song “Earth Angel” was a song called “Hey, Señorita,” which bears a resemblance to the Ritchie Valens song “Cry, Cry, Cry” (Mendheim). The same song, “Cry, Cry, Cry,” is also linked to the guitar riff in “Birthday” by the Beatles, who exploded just a few years later in the early 1960s (Mendheim 79). Bill Haley and His Comets, famous for the classic “Rock Around the Clock,” also had another hit in the pop category called “Mambo Rock” in 1955 (Busnar).¹¹

Roberts also describes how the black–Latin music links grew stronger on the east coast in the mid-1950s. Several New York R&B groups, such as the Harptones and the

Vocalers, included both black and Latino members, and were locally successful. Another such quintet, the Teenagers (fronted by Frankie Lymon), achieved major success in 1956 with the song “Why Do Fools Fall in Love?” (Roberts 137–8). By 1957, the consolidation of rhythm & blues with Latin influences was also evident in Clyde McPhatter’s “Long Lone Nights,” which revealed *marimba* and *bolero*, and Chuck Willis’s “C. C. Rider,” which was based on *rumba* patterns that were popularized by Fats Domino. Another song featuring such Latin rhythms was Ray Charles’s song “What’d I Say” in 1959, which, according to Roberts, “clearly portended the growing Latinization of black music that was to take place throughout the 1960s” (Roberts 138).

Back on the west coast, Latinos like Gil Bernal, the Rillera Brothers, Bobby Rey, and the Armenta Brothers all contributed to the establishment of R&B in LA throughout the 1950s by playing high school dances, parties, and local dance halls and by producing local hit songs (Reyes and Waldman). Gil Bernal was a Mexican-American from Watts who was mostly into jazz music and got his start by playing with Lionel Hampton until 1952.¹² Through music classes, Bernal befriended songwriter Mike Stoller and joined Stoller in his early recordings with the Robins. By 1955, Lieber and Stoller and the Robins were signed by Atlantic Records and moved to New York. The Robins went to New York without Bernal, became the Coasters, and achieved major success with rock songs like “Yakety Yak” and several others. As rock historians know very well, Mike Stoller and Jerry Lieber wrote seminal rock songs like “Hound Dog,” “Jailhouse Rock,” and “There Goes My Baby” and became one of the most successful songwriting duos in popular music history (Billig; Reyes and Waldman). What seems forgotten is that before the famous duo left LA, they were working with rising young talent like Gil Bernal, and that he had produced some instrumental recordings for Lieber and Stoller. One of those songs, “The Whip,” was used for the introduction to “The Moon-Dog Show” by Cleveland disc jockey Alan Freed (Reyes and Waldman 28–9). Thus, the introduction to the radio program that supposedly made rock and roll a household name in the United States was the product of Lieber and Stoller, several other musicians, and Gil Bernal, a young Mexican-American from LA. That is to say, Alan Freed’s groundbreaking rock and roll show began with a theme song that was a white, black, and Latino/a amalgamation.

Extending this significance, the songwriting team of Lieber and Stoller is relevant on another level entirely. Noted as an important songwriting team for rock and roll history, Lieber and Stoller were in fact Jewish. Michael Billig’s recent work has gone to great lengths to describe the Jewish contributions to rock and roll and thus further acknowledges its multicultural roots. Yet, Billig also notes how both Lieber and Stoller were influenced by Latin music(s). Upon arriving in California, Mike Stoller lived in a Mexican-American neighborhood where he listened to the Latin music of his neighbors. Stoller had joined a *pachuco* social club in his youth, and thus Latino music and rhythms were always interacting with the African-American, Anglo-American, and, of course, Jewish musical traditions that birthed the music of Jerry Lieber and Mike Stoller (Billig 48–9).

From this same early rock and roll era emerged a band called the Rhythm Rockers. Formed around 1955 by Barry and Rick Rillera, they fused blues, gospel, jazz, R&B, and Latin music, while some artists restricted their repertoire to one type of music or another (Reyes and Waldman 19). In addition to their connection to R&B artist and songwriter Richard Berry (discussed further below), the Rhythm Rockers later met up with Bill Medley, who was drawn in by their “ethnic” sound and played with the Rhythm Rockers in local events like Mexican weddings. Eventually, Bill Medley moved on to form the Righteous Brothers with Bobby Hatfield and went on to achieve major chart success with such songs as “You’ve Lost That Lovin’ Feeling” in 1964, “Unchained Melody” in 1965, and “(You’re My) Soul and Inspiration” in 1966 (Ryan). Yet when the Righteous Brothers were formed, included were Barry and Rick Rillera from the Rhythm Rockers, who were used as backup musicians on some of their early hits (Reyes and Waldman 31–2).

In early 1958 there was the famous hit song “Tequila” by the Champs—a “Tex-Mex” band that included musicians who were schooled in western swing—that went to #1 on the national charts (*Loza Barrio Rhythm* 82). At the same time, there were other Latin-influenced rock songs by black duos such as Mickey & Sylvia and Billie & Lillie (Mendheim). Of course, Ritchie “Valens” (Richard Valenzuela before his name was anglicized for better marketability in the United States) was immensely popular in the late 1950s with pop hits like “La Bamba,” “Come On Let’s Go,” and “Donna.” Yet, before Valens made it big in 1958 and after his death in 1959, there was also Baldemar Huerta (whom country music fans might remember as “Freddy Fender”), who came out of Texas and recorded “Wasted Days, Wasted Nights” and other rockers—including some in Spanish!—months prior to Valens in 1958.

California’s Bobby Rey, whose musical resumé included a show backing up James Brown on saxophone in 1958, at one point was a member of the Masked Phantom Band. Loza observes how the Masked Phantom Band produced such songs as “Corrido Rock,” an instrumental with a *norteño*-style riff on a fast rock beat. According to Loza, the “Corrido Rock” dance was fast and wild and might have been an early form of slam dancing, or moshing as it’s called today. The Masked Phantom band also wore masks on stage and “outlaw” garb to attract audiences (*Loza Barrio Rhythm* 24), and therefore the Masked Phantom Band can be seen as a predecessor to various acts in rock and roll history that would don masks, make-up, and costumes on stage. After the Masked Phantom Band, Bobby Rey went on to be the leader of the Hollywood Argyles, a band that eventually reached #1 in 1960 with the song “Alley Oop” (*Loza Barrio Rhythm* 25–6).

While R&B singer and rock and roll legend Sam Cooke noted that “Everybody Likes to Cha-Cha-Cha” (Busnar 131), other artists forged a “Latin” connection with their band names like the Fiestas, who charted hits like “So Fine” in 1959.¹³ The vocal group the Drifters, who had “There Goes My Baby,” a smash hit in the category of R&B and a #2 hit on the US charts in 1959 (Busnar 115), also had another minor hit with “Down in Mexico.” At the time, the Drifters were working with Lieber and Stoller, who, as noted, were experimenting with Latin rhythms and percussion, and

other records by the Drifters that followed also used the South American rhythm known as *baion* (Billig 55–6). Also in 1959, Dave “Baby” Cortez scored a #1 hit with “The Happy Organ” (Whitburn *Billboard Top 1000*).

What all of this evidence points toward is that there was a significant Latino/a presence in rock and roll from very early in its history. Further, the fact that the Latino/a presence in rock and roll history is virtually forgotten speaks to a particular moment in United States history when, with regard to ethno-racial relations, the dominant cultural paradigm in previous decades was assimilation. “Assimilation,” however, did not necessarily mean that people would “become” white, as the term often connotes today. The previous definition of assimilation reflected a melting-pot metaphor where many flavors blended with each other. Moreover, the history of Latino/a rock also suggests an ambivalent relationship between Latino/as and acculturation processes. While many were able to assimilate into a burgeoning scene that incorporated different musical styles and different races of people, a few artists during this period remained openly “Latin” or Chicano.” One such case was the most famous Latino rocker of the 1950s, Ritchie Valens, whose music represents the greatest Latino contribution to early rock and roll history.

Hailing from a working-class, agricultural, immigrant-family background in Pacoima and San Fernando, California, Valens arrived on the rock and roll scene while still a teenager in high school. Although his career was cut short by a tragic airplane crash in early 1959, he achieved phenomenal success in a short period of time. Only recently has the Valens legacy been examined by scholars and all agree that his influence on rock and roll is immense. Rock journalist Lester Bangs noted how it all goes back to Ritchie Valens’s “La Bamba.” Commenting on the guitar riff that Valens played on “La Bamba,” Bangs wrote, “Just consider Valens’ three-chord mariachi squawkup ... There: twenty years of rock & roll history in three chords, played more primitively each time they are recycled.” As Bangs averred, Valens’s chord progressions can be directly traced throughout rock and roll history through groups such as the Ramones, the Stooges, the Kinks, and, of course, the Kingsmen (Bangs 261).

Latino/as in the Garage

The story of “Louie Louie” by the Kingsmen is yet another link connecting Latina/os to rock and roll history and more directly to the garage-rock phenomenon of the 1960s. “Louie Louie” has been called the “world’s most famous rock ‘n’ roll song” (Marsh), and an entire book was written on the significance of the song for rock music history. Others note how “Louie Louie” led “directly” to “All Day and All of the Night” by the Kinks and “Wild Thing” by the Troggs, which in turn led directly to heavy metal (Eddy 184). “Louie Louie” can boast anthem-like status through the movie *Animal House*, is included in numerous greatest hits compilations, and remains a standard party song. Although the song “Louie Louie” itself is even more (in)famous in its own right for other reasons such as sparking much controversy and

even FBI investigations, historians Reyes and Waldman have written on the significance of the version by the Kingsmen, a Seattle, Washington-based group who made “Louie, Louie” a now classic garage-rock song.

Before the immensely popular version by the Kingsmen,¹⁴ “Louie Louie” was covered by different garage-type bands. Prior to that, it was an unknown song that was written by an R&B singer from Los Angeles named Richard Berry. Berry was a veteran of the Los Angeles R&B scene, having played with the Hollywood Blue Jays, the Flairs, the Crowns, and other vocal groups. According to Reyes and Waldman, Richard Berry wrote “Louie Louie” when he was in a multi-cultural rock/blues/Latin music ensemble called the Rhythm Rockers, and the two “Chicano” members of that band, the aforementioned Rillera brothers of the Rhythm Rockers, had introduced Berry to Latin jazz. The Latin sound that the Rhythm Rockers added to the R&B music scene in LA was the result of their affinity for Latino musicians like Tito Puente and Rene Touzet. Little could those musicians have known that they were directly influencing future rock and rollers and R&B artists like Richard Berry, who later wrote “Louie Louie” based on Touzet’s “El Loco Cha Cha”—a song the Rhythm Rockers even played in their set!

In an interview, Berry acknowledged that his “Louie Louie” song was influenced by “Loco Cha Cha,” what Morales calls an obscure Cuban *cha-cha* record (Morales 153). Morales further notes on this, “The five-note vamp that runs through the song is played on an electric organ, resembling the *son* clave, 1–2–3, 1–2, and the song progresses through *tumbao* figures that are strongly reminiscent of Afro-Cuban music” (155). Reyes and Waldman further attest, “To those hearing ‘Loco Cha Cha’ for the first time, the similarities between the two songs are remarkable” (15).

Yet, the story seems more complicated with regard to Latino/a issues as Berry revealed that he actually wanted to make “Louie Louie” a Latin song in the studio, but was prevented from doing so by his record company for fear of putting anything “too exotic” or “too ethnic” before a white audience. And so “Louie Louie” remained a Latin-influenced song that was pared down to the point where any Latin traces were virtually imperceptible. One can conclude that whether it was direct influence on the Kingsmen by Ritchie Valens or whether it was the pre-Valens, Latin jazz influence by the Rhythm Rockers and Rene Touzet on Richard Berry, who wrote “Louie Louie,” the song that is already a classic for all of rock music history can also go down as an important song revealing Latino/a presence and influence in garage rock. Although garage rock is more commonly known for featuring the British influence on rock music that turned back toward the United States, the example of “Louie Louie” points to a situation in which the continuing US influences on the British rock scene were not just African or black influences but included various Latin influences as well.

Another Latino garage-rock connection occurred in 1965 when Doug Sahm (or “Sir Douglas”) and his band, billed as the Sir Douglas Quintet, scored an international hit with the song “She’s About a Mover”, which went as high as #13 on the US pop charts in 1965. Although “She’s About a Mover” sounds much like a

take-off of “She’s a Woman” by the Beatles,¹⁵ the Sir Douglas rendition blended the Beatles with the Tex-Mex sound (Mendheim; Roberts). The salience of this point lies in the fact that the Sir Douglas Quintet was actually a Texas band that was created in order to mimic the popular British bands of the time. It was producer Huey P. Meaux who deliberately came up with the idea and “unlocked the secret formula” (Ward) for the success of the British sound, and the band’s name and image were purposely concocted to appear English.

In fact, the Sir Douglas Quintet was from south-central Texas and included some Latino/Hispanic members. In order to keep up the charade for as long as possible, the Sir Douglas Quintet even resorted to taking photographs in silhouette in order to disguise the Latino/Hispanic features of those in the band (*Nuggets* 65). Singer/frontman Doug Sahm, a caucasian of German descent, was a native of a primarily black neighborhood in San Antonio, Texas, who combined the influences of western swing, country, blues, rock, polka, and Tex-Mex. When Sahm hooked up with producer Huey Meaux, he was already a veteran of several years of the Texas music scene. Among his contemporaries and collaborators were Tex-Mex legends like Freddy Fender. Of course, Doug Sahm’s Latino/Hispanic credentials became more numerous thereafter.

Roberts notes that after a stint on the west coast during the late 1960s, Sahm returned to Texas and took up Chicano music, and in 1971 recorded an album under the name “Doug Saldaña” titled *The Return of Doug Saldaña*. As Sahm recalled, “Saldaña is the name the Mexicans gave me. They said that I had so much Mexican in me that I needed a Mexican name” (Levy). Fittingly, perhaps, Sahm was nominated for “Chicano of the Year” by *Rolling Stone* magazine (Roberts 195). Throughout his career, Sahm played, performed, or recorded with many musicians, including many different Chicanos. In his later years, Sahm’s most successful project was in the 1990s with the Texas Tornados, a band that included other Chicano legends like Augie Meyers, Flaco Jimenez, and Freddy Fender.

To hear Sir Douglas songs like “She’s About a Mover,” “Mendocino,” and various other songs that reveal the profound influence of country and blues, rhythmic Tex-Mex organ and piano by Augie Meyers, and the “accordion-influenced melodies” (Ward) that sound much like *tejano* music, it seems somewhat ridiculous to think that the Sir Douglas Quintet could have ever passed as English or British. As Ward notes, “In fact, the song ‘Mendocino’ is practically pure Border pop, and with a different vocalist and Mexican Spanish lyrics, it could be something you’d hear drifting out of a cantina somewhere in Brownsville, Texas” (Ward). Further noting the ability of the Sir Douglas Quintet to cross borders, McLeese notes: “*Mendocino* shows the ability of the quintessential Texas garage band to connect the dots geographically as well as stylistically, to straddle very different worlds without suffering any identity confusion” (448). In spite of this, trying to pass for British is part of the early story for the Sir Douglas Quintet. Interestingly, the Sir Douglas Quintet could never escape their various south Texas influences and the Tex-Mex sound, and “She’s About a Mover” remains another garage-rock classic.

Another Latino/a connection was made with Sam the Sham and the Pharaohs, who were also connected to the Texas music tradition and the Tex-Mex sound in rock and roll and have been called the quintessential Tex-Mex band of the 1960s. The band became famous for their major hit “Wooly Bully,” which went as high as #2 in Pop in 1965, and other songs like “Li'l Red Riding Hood”¹⁶ in 1966 (Mendheim 129–30). Liner notes to the aforementioned *Nuggets* box set attest to the importance of “Wooly Bully,” stating that “[the song] is not only one of the all-time great dance stompers, it is also an important link in the American rock ‘n’ roll chain” (*Nuggets* 77). And not only is “Wooly Bully” called the ultimate “frat-rock” song, the band members of the Pharaohs were actually college students at the time of or just before scoring their major hit.

“Sam the Sham” was actually Domingo Samudio (aka “Sam”), who was born and raised in Dallas, Texas. While Sam the Sham and the Pharaohs had limited success thereafter, their legacy is evident in the famous introduction to their song “Wooly Bully.” In the introduction to the song, Samudio brought in the Spanish language with the famous count-off, “*Uno, dos ... one two, tres, cuatro!*” and made popular music history. “Wooly Bully” itself has been covered by many rock acts through the years like Jimi Hendrix, Canned Heat, Joan Jett & the Blackhearts, and Los Lobos, and the count-off has been imitated and modified countless times throughout popular music history from pop/rock bands like U2 to, most recently, pop/country acts like Big & Rich.

Aside from the famous count-off in Spanish, an important link to issues of Latino/Hispanic identity surfaces with their song “(I’m In With) The Out Crowd,” which, along with “Wooly Bully,” was one of the few songs included on their greatest hits compilation that was written by Domingo Samudio. In liner notes to their greatest hits, Dahl notes that this song was about Samudio’s laments about not fitting in and about being an outsider, which referred, according to Samudio, to his beard and earrings, which set him apart from the cultural mainstream. Years later Samudio would claim that he was the first rock and roller to wear an earring, which, if it’s true, reveals another contribution by a Latino/as to popular culture in the United States. Yet what matters more, I submit, is that his outsider status could also be related to his presence as the only Latino/Hispanic band member, as a Hispanic minority on the college/university scene, or perhaps as a rare Mexican American in the burgeoning rock and roll music scene in the United States. Also worth noting is the Arabic/Egyptian aesthetic employed by Samudio in his costume and headdress and by the Pharaohs in their band name. While Samudio and the Pharaohs could have employed his Mexican heritage for a visual gimmick, it is interesting that they shied away from his real Tex-Mex identity¹⁷ in favor of another, perhaps more exotic, ethnic aesthetic. The identity politics in examples like this imply profound contradictions: For Sam the Sham, his ethnic heritage was something that came through in his artistic expression at the same time that it needed to be neutralized.

Like the Sir Douglas Quintet and Sam the Sham and the Pharaohs, another garage band that featured a highly charged organ and had the Tex-Mex sound was “? and the

Mysterians” (or Question Mark and the Mysterians). Their hit song “96 Tears” reached the #1 position on the US charts in 1966, and they also other minor hits with “I Need Somebody” and “I Can’t Get Enough of You Baby.” While the Mysterians are conspicuously absent from the aforementioned *Nuggets* collection, Lester Bangs and many others refer to the band as a very important garage-rock group. ? and the Mysterians blended eccentricity with angst, soul and R&B with the garage-rock sound, and held it all together with the steady cadence of Tex-Mex organ melodies. Their song “96 Tears” has been called the perfect song, and the Mysterians have been called “the quintessential garage band” (Linna *96 Tears*).

To underscore their impact, Eddy comments that “‘96 Tears’-type organ notes” can be heard in the Velvet Underground’s “White Light/White Heat” and at the end of “I’m Waiting for the Man” (189). It should not be very surprising, therefore, to note how the same song that has been called the quintessential song for garage rock is also remembered for its influence on punk rock. Ryan refers to “96 Tears” as “the first garage-punk” (240), Bangs hears it as “Proto-punk” (264), and Morales calls it “seminal to the punk aesthetic” (161). In a recent book focusing on punk rock in its British character, Jon Savage also cites “96 Tears” as a significant pre-punk song:

[It] resulted in a purely white, blue-collar style, in which any black rhythmic influence was bleached out in favour of pure noise and texture: fuzz guitar, feedback, drones and whiny vocal. The flatly rhythmic repetition of a song like ? and the Mysterians’ “96 Tears” seemed to be the perfect form through which to express a numb nihilism. (Savage 81–2)

To put this quotation in better context, the author is discussing how ? and the Mysterians reflected a supposedly “whiter” style of playing rock and roll, unlike other African-American currents in rock. What is most interesting from this perspective is that a song by four Tex-Mex, accordion-influenced Latinos has gone down in history as the quintessential garage-rock song as well as key for early punk rock. Rather than its apparently assumed British, English, or white character, one can only wonder if the song would be held in such high regard if people had known of the band’s Latino/Hispanic origins.

To return to this issue of race and culture, a VH1 documentary suggests that ? and the Mysterians were probably successful because of the fact that, initially, people were not sure exactly what they were. Ryan notes how the band members never wanted anybody to know their real names and that the lead singer, Rudy Martínez, wore wraparound sunglasses “all the time” (Ryan 240). The rock critic Bangs later recalled how he and his friends were excited about the fact that Martínez never took off his sunglasses (Bangs 264). The Mysterians were, in fact, a group of Mexican Americans who came from—of all places—Saginaw, Michigan, although recent liner notes suggest Texas origins. Although Mexican-Americans, part of the mystery seems to be in their non-white and non-black physical features which further contributed to their mystique. While this may suggest an attempt to hide their ethnicity, ? and the Mysterians seem to have benefited from—as did Samudio and the Sir Douglas

Quintet—ambiguous racial features that allowed them to appear to be something else (at least initially).

George Lipsitz observes that Cannibal and the Headhunters, like ? and the Mysterians, were another popular Latino garage band that had a major hit song during this period but also suffered from their ethno-racial ambiguity (Lipsitz *Dangerous*). As lead singer of Cannibal and the Headhunters, Frankie “Cannibal” Garcia remembers how their success was stymied after 1965 when record companies didn’t know how to market a Mexican-American or Chicano group to the United States. As Frankie Garcia recalls, rock and roll in the 1960s included a black/white dichotomy that was all too unfriendly for anybody who didn’t fit those expectations (Lipsitz *Time* 146).

Yet another piece of the Latino garage-rock puzzle appears with the infectious and catchy song “I Want Candy” by the Strangeloves. It is not difficult to recall the famous “Bo Diddley” beat, otherwise known as the “shave and a haircut” beat, the “hambone” beat, or the “Willie and the Hand Jive” beat (see Note 2 on Johnny Otis, frontman for the Fiestas). “I Want Candy” by the Strangeloves reached the #11 position in 1965 (Whitburn *Billboard Top 1000*), and is another garage-rock gem that is included in the 1998 *Nuggets* box set. This song did not have a Latino/Hispanic author, nor were any of the Strangeloves of Latino/Hispanic descent. The Latino/Hispanic connection, however, comes through the song’s hook, the famous “Bo Diddley” beat—which was actually an Afro-Latino invention.

As music scholars note, throughout the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s the Afro-Latino jazz connection was growing stronger. Cuban Mario Bauzá went to New York and played with famous jazz bandleaders like Chick Webb and changed the jazz world when he began to teach Dizzy Gillespie’s band “Afro-Cuban techniques, including composing melodic lines for brass instruments from Yoruban ritual drum patterns and melodies” (Morales). Morales further reminds us: “Bauzá’s influence was primarily responsible for the development of most of the transitions American music has gone through since World War II—from swing to modern jazz; rhythm and blues to rock and roll; rhythm and blues to funk” (Morales 153). Gillespie himself has insisted that Latin-influenced bass patterns are the basis for modern-day funk music. Cuban *rumba* patterns have been credited as the source for early rock and roll songs by Fats Domino, Lloyd Price, and Little Richard (Morales; Palmer). Further adding to the legacy of Mario Bauzá, Morales and Palmer report on the significance of a renewed emphasis on a five-beat *clave* rhythm that has been called “the Bo Diddley beat” in rock and roll. Although scholars have acknowledged this famous rhythm in rock history, what remains virtually unknown is that the famous Bo Diddley sound was actually the influence of Afro-Cuban traditions from Mario Bauzá and other Afro-Latinos as well as a Cuban musical tradition connecting the “Bo Diddley beat” to Spain (Palmer).¹⁸

Around the same time as Bauzá, other Latinos emerged who years later had indirect influences on what came to be known as rock and roll. Led by bandleaders such as Don Azpiazu and Xavier Cugat, the *rumba* revived a national fascination in

the United States with Latin American music and ballroom dancing with songs like “El Manicero/The Peanut Vendor.” This song also featured the aforementioned *clave* rhythm, described by Starr and Waterman as the source for the “Bo Diddley” beat (56), and to hear “El Manicero/The Peanut Vendor,” there is no question about its similarity to the “Bo Diddley” beat. Thus, “I Want Candy” leaves us with yet another example of the Latino/a influence on early rock and roll music and, later, garage rock and punk rock.

Like the often-forgotten Latin legacy of songs like “I Want Candy” by the Strangeloves, yet another major Latino/a garage-rock contribution came through the Sonics. The Sonics are another band that might claim the title of quintessential garage-rock band, and, noting their importance, Miriam Linna calls the Sonics’ 1965 album “the greatest punk rock album ever made” (Linna *The Sonics*). Nonetheless, the Sonics are another band included on the 1998 *Nuggets* collection, for songs like “Psycho,” without any mention of a Latino/a connection. Again, the Sonics did not have any Latino/Hispanic members or any other obvious indication of a connection to Latin music. However, a brief review of the liner notes to the recent release of their breakthrough album from 1965 reveals another connection. The Sonics themselves recall and acknowledge that the famous rock and roll guitarist Jerry Miller was a huge influence on their music. In this story of the Sonics’ evolution, the Sonics recall that Jerry Miller happened to be a neighbor, and they came to know him after he had returned from Texas. In Texas, Jerry Miller had played with the Bobby Fuller Four, a band from El Paso, Texas, that had scored a hit with the song “I Fought the Law.” As one member of the Sonics recalls about Jerry Miller, “He was down there in Texas listening to that stuff and when he came back with all these new tunes and a new style, well, nobody in the Northwest had ever heard anything like that before” (Linna *The Sonics* 5).

So, once again, evidence would indicate that a significant garage-rock contribution arose out of the inter-cultural and cross-cultural influence of Texas music and, perhaps, another connection to US Latino/as. As all of the examples above reveal, the Latino/a connections to garage rock, as well as rock and roll and popular music in general, are extensive, and the stories of their origin are worth retelling, most notably for what they reveal about the place of Latino/as in mainstream popular music in the United States—that the Latino/a contribution has been longstanding, consistent, and, I would argue, quite profound.

Latino/as and Mainstream Society

At the outset of this article, I introduced the topic of the supposed emergence of Latino/as in mainstream pop music that parallels recent cultural shifts and points toward a need for greater understanding of Latino/a people in the United States. As I have argued, these recent cultural shifts in the United States beg the question of what such trends have to offer for an understanding of Latino/a identity. Once again, the oft-celebrated “emergence” of Latino/as in US popular music cannot be free of

controversy. Building on a stream in popular music studies that examines popular music as a form of mediated communication, I argue that popular music should be seen as a discursive space where Latino/a cultural issues can be examined and better understood with regard to the relationship of Latino/as and a larger society, specifically the US mainstream. The logical question that follows here is: What, then, is a Latino/a cultural issue?

One of the more prominent cultural issues related to the place of Latino/as in US society centers around language use, and scholars and journalists have begun to discuss language and identity issues in relation to popular music. For example, Bender recognizes that language issues are significant for discussions of Latino/a music artists, identity, assimilation, and/or hybridization. As Bender notes, “the current mainstream success of [Latino/a pop] artists is achieved predominantly through English language recordings, as it generally has been for Latino/a artists in the past” (723). For Latino/as, however, the significance of crossover attempts by Latino/a artists from various nations attempting to capitalize on the North American market is that such attempts are often associated with an alleged loss of identity or “selling out.” The international superstar Celine Dion, a native French-speaking Canadian, is a relevant example here, given that she was thought to have lost her authentic French-speaking identity and was accused of selling out to US audiences and to the English language (Berger and Carroll). In other words, singing in English or catering to US audiences can change the perception of some artists in relation to their avowed or ascribed ethnic identity.

In other circumstances, a reverse process has occurred whereby some US Latino/a artists have produced songs in Spanish to capitalize on Central American and South American markets, or even for Spanish-speaking markets in North America. Christina Aguilera is a recent example for Latina/Hispanic women, but it has happened with other artists like Selena and Linda Ronstadt in previous decades. While Linda Ronstadt’s celebrated return-to-roots *mariachi* projects received a great deal of public attention in the 1980s and 1990s, Bender reminds us that these albums have been reviled by non-Spanish-speaking people in the United States who attended her concerts expecting to hear her sing country and rock. Conversely, her *mariachi* albums were also seen by many Latino/as as inauthentic. The significance of these attempts lies in the fact that capitalization on a market coincides with changing identity/identities, and often with differing opinions about what those changes signify. For Latino/as in the United States, perhaps, it seems success is always questionable with regard to maintaining identity.

In other words, just as quickly as Latino/as achieve a certain presence and measure of success in the US mainstream, they are also plagued by identity questions related to language, ethnicity, and nationality. Moreover, Latino/as face apparent paradoxes with respect to living between two (or more) cultures and moving in and out of vastly different ways of being. While assimilation to English or the US mainstream seems ultimately beneficial and positive to some, to others it represents, with respect to identity, the negativity of loss or change. For some, “crossovers” can come to

symbolize successful integration of citizens or cultural or ethnic groups into the US mainstream. Yet for others it still seems that the US mainstream is not completely ready for such paradoxes. The examples above reveal that rather than a willingness to accept bicultural and multicultural people and their identities, mainstream culture in the United States tends to impose pressures on artists and musicians. The pressure to sing in English is just one form of such pressures; the pressure to assimilate (i.e. to be more “American”) is another. The salience of these facts is that the presence of Latino/as in mainstream United States culture further reveals the complications of Latino/a identity.

Furthermore, the examples above characterize assimilated Latino/as. Perhaps this is why the Latin legacy has been undervalued and virtually forgotten. And perhaps this explains how many people believed in a Latin “explosion” just a few years ago. By the same token, the story of garage rock that is presented here is significant beyond the fact that it debunks the myth of a recent Latino/a explosion or “boom” in popular music. Rather, the garage-rock story should contribute to understanding our society’s often-problematic relationship with ethnic minorities and marginalized groups. Beyond their being left out in more whitewashed versions of history, this research reveals some of the tensions that Latino/as (like others) face with regard to assimilating, maintaining their heritage, retaining a language, trying to pass as white and not passing as white, fitting in and not fitting in, being victims of exclusion and/or marginalization with regard to organizations and structures because of physical features or cultural barriers, being forgotten and under-appreciated, and, overall, walking the line between the black and white dichotomy of mainstream US culture.

Conclusion

In this article, I have reviewed several critical garage-rock songs through a Latino/Hispanic cultural lens. The significance of the Foucauldian “genealogical” path presented in this article is, first, that the history of rock and roll is not solely the province of black and white youth in the United States, and second, that the garage-rock phenomenon, as it emerged in the mid-1960s, was not solely the creation of British or Anglo-American youth. Rather, as I have shown above, some of the most important garage-rock songs were related to Latino/as in different ways. As mentioned earlier, the fact that these examples are not a part of the more common history of rock and roll points to the fact of dominant ideologies of binary constructions of ethno-racial relations in the United States. This is an issue that has been mentioned by some scholars of popular music (Cepeda “*Mucho Loco*”), but what is interesting is that these facts have not been addressed in greater depth. With regard to this, one conclusion that I draw here is that the development of rock and roll music (as well as its cultural aesthetic) has been a result of inter-cultural exchange between the United States and US Latino/as (and Latin America) as much as between blacks and whites within the United States. The history presented here proves that at least part of this development was a product of Latin American influences.

Rock and roll music was and is an intercultural, transnational product of many cultures and various ethnic groups. It would be foolish to think of rock music and to continue to ignore the rich Latino/a history presented in this article. From the earliest jazz influences through *tangos*, *rumbas*, *cha-chas*, and *mambos*, to Ritchie Valens's guitar riffs; from Black–Latino vocal groups to Black–White–Latino fusions; from the original creator of “Louie Louie” who wanted to make it a Latin song to Sam “the Sham” and counting off in Spanish; from ? and the Mysterians being ambiguously ethnic to the Sir Douglas Quintet and trying to pass; from the Latin-influenced Bo Diddley beat in “I Want Candy” to the numerous Latino/Hispanic individuals in various US garage bands; and from obscure contributions like slam-dancing and wearing costumes and make-up to the “rebellious” fashion of wearing an earring, the garage-rock story deserves at least a mention of its Latin legacy. Thus I offer this genealogical exploration of garage-rock history as evidence of the notable presence and profound influence of Latino/Hispanic contributions to popular music over several decades.

Moreover, the study of Latino/a rock music reveals tensions that I mentioned at the beginning of this article. As I began this discussion with the supposed emergence of Latino/as and the Latin “boom” of recent years, I further contend that such discourse reveals a dominant US paradigm that sees Latino/as and Hispanics as foreign, exotic, and immigrant. Rather than going beyond the black/white paradigms of popular music history, it appears that the US mainstream continues to reinforce such stereotypes that discuss US history as white and black and further displaces the significance of various racial, ethnic, and cultural groups within our borders.

As this study suggests further exploration into continuing issues of minority exclusion and the reification of the black/white dichotomy in US culture, I am hopeful that future scholars will study phenomena like garage rock through various cultural lenses. I submit that studying popular music through different lenses allows us to understand the connections between popular music and society in the past and present, and, of course, in the context of its potential impact on the future.

Notes

- [1] Previous versions of this research paper have been presented at the annual convention for the National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies (NACCS) in Los Angeles, California, and for a panel discussion on Chicana(o)/Latina(o) cultural expression at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, Utah.
- [2] The terms “Latino” and “Latina” are closely related to the English word “Latin American” and are rooted in the Spanish word *latinoamericano*. Quite often, the term “Latinos” can be applied to Spanish-speaking peoples throughout the world and especially those in Latin America and the Caribbean. In the United States this term has recently become somewhat synonymous with the term “hispanic” so as to designate not only Latin immigrants or Spanish-speakers in the United States, but something approximating a demographic category that also includes the US-born descendants of Spanish-speaking peoples as well. I will therefore be using the term “Latino” to denote a more neutral identifier that approximates “Latin American,” reflecting a pan-American, pan-Latin view of the Latin diaspora, irrespective of national boundaries. Thus, it is important to reiterate that the term

“Latino/a” can indicate a person from the United States, especially if a circumstance reveals a similarity to cultural politics of other Latin Americans. (One such example of such cultural politics would be assimilation versus resistance to US hegemony, although there are many others.) Further, following Fern Johnson, “Latino/a” will be used here consistently, emphasizing the masculine and feminine forms together “in order to avoid androcentric interpretation of the term” (167). Thus, throughout the rest of this article the term “Latino/a” denotes people from various Latin American (Central American, South American, or North American) nations.

- [3] Ricky Martin rose to the top of the charts in 1999 with “Livin’ La Vida Loca” and followed this with “Shake Your Bon Bon.” Almost on cue, Enrique Iglesias released an album with the hits “Rhythm Divine” and “Bailamos,” while Marc Anthony scored with “I Need to Know” and Lou Bega broke through with “Mambo No. 5.” Similarly, Jennifer Lopez’s “If You Had My Love” was a major success, while Christina Aguilera’s self-titled debut album featured #1 hit songs and gained acclaim by music critics.
- [4] The 2000 Census uses the category of “Spanish/Hispanic/Latino.”
- [5] For more on Proposition 187, see published work by Hasian and Delgado, and Ono and Sloop.
- [6] “Black Is Black” reached the #4 position in the United States in 1966 (Whitburn *Billboard Top 1000*).
- [7] See Kauppila’s treatment of the San Jose scene in a recent issue of *Popular Music and Society* from 2005.
- [8] “Farmer John” reached the #19 position in the United States in 1964 (Whitburn *Billboard Top 1000*).
- [9] “Woolly Bully” reached the #2 position in the United States in 1965 (Whitburn *Billboard Top 1000*).
- [10] “She’s About a Mover” reached the #13 position in the United States in 1965 (Whitburn *Billboard Top 1000*).
- [11] “Mambo Rock” reached the #18 position in the United States in 1955 (Whitburn *Billboard Top 1000*).
- [12] For more on Lionel Hampton’s connection to Latino music, see Palmer.
- [13] The Fiestas are relevant on another level in that they included the famous Johnny Otis, a Greek-American who was often believed to be an African-American because of his dark complexion. On his own, Johnny Otis also scored a hit with “Willie and the Hand Jive,” a song that features the famous *clave* beat that is also called the Bo Diddley beat. Other famous Latinized songs by Johnny Otis include “Willie Did the Cha Cha” and “Mambo Boogie.”
- [14] “Louie Louie” by the Kingsmen reached the #2 position in 1963 (Whitburn *Billboard Top 1000*).
- [15] The author wishes to acknowledge both Rick Sanger and Paul Kauppila (respectively) for their insight regarding this matter and a factual correction.
- [16] “Li’l Red Riding Hood” reached the #2 position in 1966 (Whitburn *Billboard Top 1000*).
- [17] Years later Samudio tapped into his Tex-Mex heritage by recording folk ballads (including some in Spanish) and composing music with Ry Cooder for the soundtrack to the 1982 film *The Border*. Decades later, he even performed with other Tex-Mex musicians like Doug Sahm, Freddy Fender, and the Texas Tornados.
- [18] Although the contribution of Bo Diddley to rock and roll continues to be acknowledged in recent music magazines like *Rolling Stone* (Strauss) and *Mojo* (Hurt), these recent articles also continue the debate about the origins of the famous “Bo Diddley beat.” In one of these recent articles Bo Diddley himself admits that he was not its creator and that he stumbled upon it accidentally. While some authors point to its origin in Chicago and others suggest Texas or New Orleans, others like musicologist Robert Palmer point to its origins in Cuba and Spain.

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