

Unsettled Passage

A U.S.-Mexico
Border Symposium
of Sonic Encounter

February 27

5 pm - 9 pm

International House

February 28

9:45 am - 7 pm

Franke Institute

With a performance
by Sones de México
Ensemble



Unsettled Passage: A U.S.-Mexico Border Symposium of Sonic Encounter

February 27 - 28, 2025

University of Chicago

“Unsettled Passage” builds upon the Inauural Balzan Symposium (Franke Institute, February 9, 2024) to continue broadly rethinking the global soundscape of arts and humanities and, specifically, to collectively reexamine and reimagine some of the sonic functions of borderlands: as sites of silence, precarity, and violence; as regions of mediation, passage, and transformation; and as zones of encounter, possibility, and even hope. The 2025 symposium will focus on one of the most highly mediated and mediatized borders in our current political and cultural landscape: the US-Mexico Border. Given the heightened violence and vitriol faced today by migrants, we see it as the challenge of ethnomusicologists, anthropologists, historians, and scholars of performance to listen to and act with the various forms of sonic encounter happening at and beyond the border. For this conference, we are especially interested in expanding how we think of the US-Mexico borderlands, not only as a space to be crossed or a subjectivity to be inhabited, but also as a constellation of deep pressure points for generative possibilities and encounters.

This symposium turns around four main themes that we see as crucial (re)orientations for the study of music and sound on the US-Mexico border:

● **Returns, comings and goings**, and modes of movement, travel, and crossing that unsettle dominant narratives of crossing. In what ways do migrants engage with the border, both materially and metaphorically? What crosses the border, and how?

● **New communities and forms of belonging** that are carved out in various parts of the United States (and beyond). How have migrants staked out lives in perhaps unexpected areas of the country? And what do these new communities mean for the shifting cultural forms and sites of encounter across the United States?

● **Novel forms of identification and subjectivity** that account for the multiplicity of communities that live in or traverse the borderlands, including Indigenous, Afro-descendent, Caribbean, and other communities. How might we understand the heterogeneous makeup of migrant caravans and migrant communities? What does this diversity mean for the forms of sonic encounter on and around the border? What does this multiplicity afford?

● **Genre and ontology of music and sound**. Music and dance practices and aesthetics themselves chart the passage across borderlands, forming genres that contain narratives of migrants passing through historical moments of conflict (e.g., corrido and decima) and the processes of return and exchange that reconfigure the political meanings of the border (e.g., mariachi and huapango arribeño). How does music sound the narratives of migrants, individually and

“Unsettled Passage” will bring together young scholars, musicians, and a broader public to together engage with the many forms of sonic encounter afforded by this vital borderland. This is a challenge that we see as more vital than ever, given the dire news that comes out every day from the border region. Migrants move back and forth over the US-Mexico border, facing violence and precarity on both sides. These migrants, too, are of diverse backgrounds: Mexican, Central American (Guatemalan, Salvadorian), Caribbean (Haitian, Cuban), South American (Venezuelan, Ecuadorian), Afro-descendent, Indigenous—and, of course, the list only continues to grow. On the US-Mexico border we see some of the darkest moments of our contemporary world, but also some of the most profoundly hopeful and moving.

Organized by: Chris Batterman Cháirez and Philip V. Bohlman

Financial support from:

Franke Institute for the Humanities
The Balzan Foundation
Department of Music, University of Chicago
Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies,
University of Chicago
Department of Race, Indigeneity, and Diaspora,
University of Chicago
Office of Multicultural Student Affairs, University of
Chicago
Ethnoise! Music and Sound Workshop
International House, University of Chicago

Program at a Glance

DAY 1

February 27 – International House

5 pm – Introductory remarks

5:10 pm – Keynote #1, Alex E. Chávez
(University of Notre Dame)

“Sonorous Present: Songs of Border Crossings, Sunrises, and Mournings”

6:30 pm – Dinner and reception

7:30 pm – Sonés de México Ensemble



DAY 2

February 28 – Franke Institute

9:30 am – Registration

9:45 am – Opening remarks

Anna Shultz (Chair, University of Chicago Department of Music)

10 am-11:30 am – Panel 1: Boundaries & Belongings

Chair: **Jessica Swanston Baker** (University of Chicago)

Joseph Maurer (Massachusetts Institute of Technology)

Ida Maria Tello (Washington University, St. Louis)

Teresita Lozano (University of Texas, Rio Grande Valley)

12 pm – Lunch

1 pm-2:30 pm – Panel 2: Mediations & Mobilities

Chair: **Mauricio Tenorio** (University of Chicago)

Davindar Singh (Harvard University)

Karma Frierson (University of Rochester)

Chris Batterman Cháirez (University of Chicago)

3 pm-4:30 pm – Panel 3: Sounds & Solidarities

Chair: **Travis A. Jackson** (University of Chicago)

Jonah Francese (University of Chicago)

Ronnie Malley (University of Chicago)

Sophia Enriquez (Duke University)

5 pm – Xochitl C. Chávez

(University of California, Riverside)

Playing Solidarity: Acompañamiento as Musical and Methodological Practice

6:30 pm – Closing remarks

Philip V. Bohlman (University of Chicago)

Chris Batterman Cháirez (University of Chicago)

7 pm – Dinner

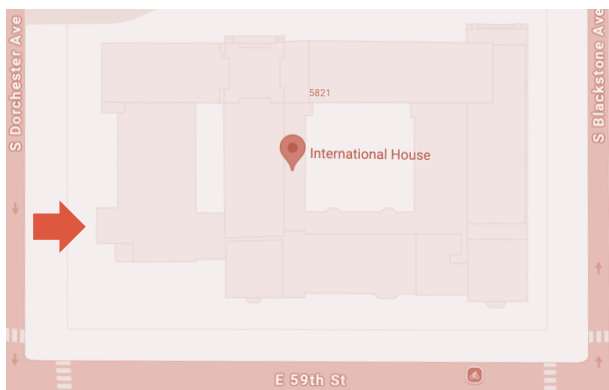
Symposium Venues

International House

Assembly Hall

1414 E. 59th Street

Chicago, Illinois 60637

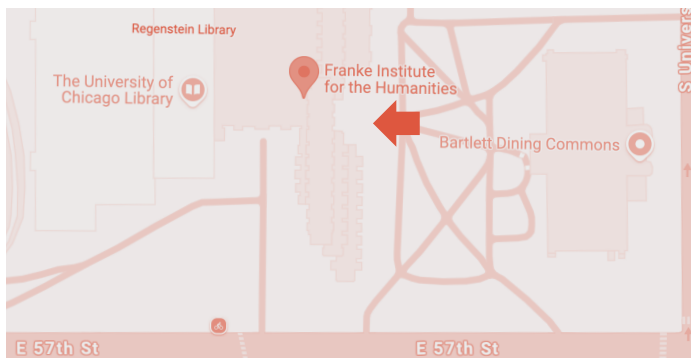


The entrance to the assembly hall is on the west side of the building, facing S. Dorchester Ave.

Franke Institute for the Humanities

1100 E. 57th Street

Chicago, Illinois 60637



The Franke Institute is connected to the Regenstein Library. It can be accessed through the east side of the building and the entrance is in the foyer, before properly entering the library.

Keynotes



Alex E. Chávez

University of Notre Dame

Sonorous Present: Songs of Border Crossings, Sunrises, and Mournings

An immersive poetic and musical passage, Alex E. Chávez's recently released album *Sonorous Present* extends sonic meditations on loss, migration, and memory across America's borderlands as physical place and liminal space. What began as an experimental and improvised performance—inspired by the music and poetics of Chávez's multi-award-winning book *Sounds of Crossing: Music, Migration, and the Aural Poetics of Huapango Arribeño* (Duke 2017)—was subsequently reimagined as a studio album in collaboration with Grammy Award-winning producer Quetzal Flores featuring luminaries from the worlds of traditional Mexican son, poetry, and jazz. Through integration of a range of scholarly disciplines and communities of artistic practice, this multi-modal scholarly work uniquely integrates regional Mexican and Latin American sonic elements with field recordings and ethnographic songwriting drawn from years of research across the U.S.-Mexico border and his own personal experiences of loss. In his talk, *Sonorous Present: Songs of Border Crossings, Sunrises, and Mournings* Chávez addresses how this work crosses the sunburst surreal of America's musical and cultural borderlands, refiguring the borders of both performance and intellectual engagement to strategically reimagine the possibilities of what a studio album can sound like and the forms scholarship can take.

Scholar-artist-producer, **Alex E. Chávez** is Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Notre Dame, where he is also a Faculty Fellow of the Institute for Latino Studies. His research explores articulations of Latinx sounds and aurality in relation to race, place-making, and the intimacies that bind lives across physical and cultural borders. He is the author of the multi-award-winning book *Sounds of Crossing: Music, Migration, and the Aural Poetics of Huapango Arribeño* (Duke University Press, 2017)—recipient of three book awards, including the Alan Merriam Prize from the Society for Ethnomusicology (2018)—and has published in *American Anthropologist*, *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, *Journal of American Folklore*, *Latino Studies*, and *Latin American Music Review*. He has consistently crossed the boundary between performer and ethnographer in the realms of academic research and publicly engaged work as an artist and producer. Chávez has recorded and toured with his own music projects, composed documentary scores for Emmy Award-winning films, worked closely with Smithsonian Folkways, and collaborated with Grammy Award-winning and Grammy Award-nominated artists. He is co-editor of the volume *Ethnographic Refusals / Unruly Latinidades* (2022), which grows out of an Advanced Seminar he co-chaired at the School for Advanced Research, and the recently published special issue in *American Anthropologist* entitled *Amplify*. A Fellow of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Science Foundation, and the Ford Foundation, in 2020 he was named one of ten Mellon Emerging Faculty Leaders by the Institute for Citizens and Scholars. His current book project—*Sound City: Place, Poiesis, Xicago*—is forthcoming through Duke University Press. He serves on the Board of Governors of the Chicago Chapter of the Recording Academy (Grammys).



Xóchitl C. Chávez

University of California, Riverside

Playing Solidarity: Acompañamiento as Musical and Methodological Practice

As ethnomusicology seeks to expand its methodological toolkit, this paper presents innovative community-engaged research methods developed through long-term collaboration with Indigenous Oaxacan philharmonic bands across the U.S.-Mexico border. Drawing from a decade of fieldwork, I demonstrate how the practice of acompañamiento (accompaniment) and collective song-writing workshops create inclusive spaces that transcend conventional participant-observation. Music retreats and encuentros emerge organically from community-identified needs and priorities, deliberately avoiding the imposition of Western academic frameworks. Through organizing these community-led spaces in Los Angeles and Oaxaca, I developed a methodology that fosters intimate dialogue and collaborative knowledge production. This approach has been particularly effective in supporting women musicians' visibility and leadership in traditionally male-dominated spaces. The methods presented move beyond standard interviews and musical transcription to include sustained community engagement through shared creative practice, collaborative composition, and cross-border network building. By emphasizing long-term commitment and cultural humility, these methods address the field's growing need for diverse research approaches that serve both academic and community interests while generating rich ethnographic data that speaks to contemporary social issues.

Dr. Xóchitl C. Chávez is Associate Professor at the University of California, Riverside Department of Music. She holds the historic distinction of being the first tenured Chicana in both the UCR department and any UC music program. She earned her Ph.D. in cultural anthropology with a designated emphasis in Latin American and Latino Studies from UC Santa Cruz.

Her work was complemented by interdisciplinary training in Museum Studies, Ethnomusicology, Folklore, Gender Studies, and Social Documentation. As an activist scholar and musician, Dr. Chávez's research centers on practices of accompaniment and sincere collaborative intention, ethically documenting Mexican Indigenous migrants and Latinos in the United States. Her forthcoming book, "La Guelaguetza: Oaxacan Migrant Festivals and the Making of Transborder Indigeneity" (University of Oxford Press), draws from extensive fieldwork in Oaxaca and California, examining the intersection of cultural preservation and migration. The project features an innovative interactive web companion that showcases music, dance, and ethnographic documentary film, making these cultural practices accessible to global audiences.

Her current research focuses on women musicians in intergenerational Zapotec brass bands in Los Angeles, and their transborder relationships with communities of origin in Oaxaca, Mexico. This work includes her collaboration with Banda Regional Mujeres del Viento Florido de Santa María Tlahuitoltepec, where she served as a co-facilitator in their collective songwriting process and contributed to their 2020 anthem, "Mujeres."

Dr. Chávez has secured grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and contributed to important projects such as "Soundscapes of the People: A Musical Ethnography of Pueblo, Colorado." Prestigious institutions, including the Smithsonian Institution Center for Folklife & Cultural Heritage and the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Latino, have sought her expertise, where she served as a curatorial advisor for the Inaugural Molina Family Gallery in the National Museum of the American Latino. At The Cheech Marin Center for Chicano Art & Culture, she serves on the inaugural National Advisory Committee. She coordinates an NEH-funded Music Residency (2024-2025), demonstrating her commitment to cultural heritage preservation.

Published in both Spanish and English, Dr. Chávez's research appears in respected journals and through prestigious university presses, including the University of California Press and the University of Illinois Press. Her innovative approach to scholarship combines traditional research methodologies with contemporary storytelling technologies, creating dynamic virtual archives that preserve cultural connections while democratizing access to cultural knowledge. This work exemplifies her dedication to ethical documentation standards and meaningful community engagement throughout her research practice.

Panelists

Chris Batterman Cháirez

University of Chicago

Returning: Scaling Indigenous Music in Mexico and Beyond

Music seems to us the perennial migrant, crossing borders and communities with relative ease. And along these routes, music might do several things, including opening up new sites for rethinking what music, sound, and performance are in the first place. But what happens when we cut off the celebratory tone of ethnomusicologists and anthropologists around music's movements? What happens as music crosses into different realms of value and meaning? And what happens when music returns? In this paper, I address these conceptual questions by considering the digital and material circulation of *pirekua*, an Indigenous P'urhépecha music from Michoacán, Mexico. P'urhépecha regions are among the largest sender communities to the United States, and migrants (and musicians) often travel to the US for periods of seasonal labor. Some choose to remain; others return to Michoacán. And *pirekua* moves with them. This paper follows the media movements and travels of *pirekua* back and forth across the US-Mexico border to show a few things. First, I demonstrate the complex and non-linear routes of Indigenous migrants and music from Mexico to illuminate the various types of (dis)encounters that these movements generate. Second, I model an ethnographic approach to the problem of scale that foregrounds the ways in which migrant music illuminates the complex shifts embodied by migrants as they move through different geographical and epistemological spaces and render themselves locally, nationally, and transnationally.

Chris Batterman Cháirez is an ethnographer and ethnomusicologist from Mexico City. His current book project is an ethnographic study of the intercalations of music and power in Michoacán. Specifically, the book takes P'urhépecha music as a passageway for interrogating the temporal and felt regimes of multicultural governance for Indigenous communities. His second large-scale project is an ethnographic study of media ecosystems and cartel violence in rural Mexico. His work has received support from Fulbright, Fulbright-Hays, and the Wenner-Gren Foundation, among others. He maintains active research interests in Brazil and has published on these topics in the *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* and *Ethnomusicology*. He was a professional jazz musician in a past life.

Duke University

Fandango Futurities & Southern Mobilities: Son Jarocho's Roots/Routes from Southern Veracruz to the Southern U.S.

Drawing on Latinx studies, ethnomusicology, and folklore studies, I explore the significance of the fandango—a celebration of the son jarocho folk music tradition from Veracruz, Mexico—as a site of community building for Latinx communities in the U.S. South. I trace transnational musical networks that connect southern Veracruz to the U.S. South, focusing especially on the diasporic community from the Sotavento region of Veracruz to Durham, North Carolina, and the emergence of son jarocho activities across the U.S. South. I argue that the fandango offers a way for us to consider a new musical way of knowing across regional orientations through what I refer to as southern mobilities. Telling new stories of belonging while also gesturing toward a forgotten Mexican southern past, these southern mobilities form and sound the critical connective tissues of migrant histories, routes, and futures.

Sophia M. Enríquez is the Andrew W. Mellon Assistant Professor of Music at Duke University where she teaches courses in the Program for Latino/a Studies in the Global South and holds a secondary appointment as assistant professor of Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies.

Sophia is a scholar of regional music and migration in the U.S. South. Under contract with University of North Carolina Press, Sophia's book project "Canciones de Los Apalaches: Latino Music, Migration, and Belonging in Appalachia and the South" shows how longstanding narratives of Appalachia as a monolith have obscured the movement of Latino people to and through the region over the past century. Her work has appeared in the *Journal of Popular Music Studies*, *Journal of American Music*, *Journal of Appalachian Studies*, and various nonacademic venues.

Sophia is passionate about community-engaged scholarship and has worked on several public folklore projects across the Appalachian region. She is also an active practitioner of both Mexican and Appalachian folk musics. In 2021, Sophia co-founded Son de Carolina, a Durham, NC-based collective dedicated to the study of the Mexican folk music tradition son jarocho. She is the co-director of the Fandango de Durham, an annual festival that celebrates the growing son jarocho community in Durham.

El Año de la Mujer Indígena: Rap Originario y las Mujeres en la Lucha

On December 23rd, 2024, President Claudia Sheinbaum and the Mexican government made an official press conference announcement that 2025 will be “El Año de la Mujer Indígena.” While perhaps a message with good intent, the government focuses on four women: la mujer Maya, la mujer Mexica, la mujer Mixteca, and la mujer Tolteca. With sixty-eight nationally recognized languages, many Nations continue to fight daily for their communities. This presentation looks to an ecology of Indigeneity through a mujeres indígenas lens. While this does take the physical forms of water, land, and food rights being stripped by extractive industries across colonial borders, it also encapsulates the broader fabric of Native life through issues such as femicide and language preservation. Focusing on mujeres indígenas rappers whose rebellion and resistance lives in the borderlands, I argue that stewarded by mujeres indígenas, Native hip hop ecology is a place and community-based hip hop practice that is an extension of the land, the continued eco-histories that face Natives, and a community-based practice that is rooted in human and non-human relations alike. Due to continued colonization, these practices grapple with transnational migration, displacement, and extractive industries.

Jonah Francese is a PhD candidate at the University of Chicago whose work spans from Native hip hop, to Black dance in soccer, to Chicano rap. Outside of scholarship, he has worked to program events at the Pilsen Arts and Community House, the Chicago Park District's "Nights Out in the Park" initiative, and the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs here on campus. Jonah is also a trumpet player and composer with four released albums, having toured internationally to Europe, Africa, and - most related to this symposium - to the Mexican borderlands through Fulbright-Garcia Robles and COMEXUS. His favorite musical memory is getting to open for Salt-N-Pepa.

Karma Frierson

University of Rochester

On Crossovers and Representation: or, the Many Travels of an Afro-Mexican Musical Form

Traveling through interstellar space there is a melody that emerged centuries ago among Indigenous people and people of African descent in the coastal plains of Veracruz, Mexico. Closer to home, other melodies from this same folkloric tradition have become part of the soundscapes and popular cultures of both sides of the US-Mexico border. Son Jarocho, the genre that gave the world La Bamba and the universe El Cascabel, is a testament to the power of music and the connections made and remade through it.

In this talk, I think through the many travels of son jarocho and how they have impacted narratives of race and collective identity. As music from this tradition crosses genres, national borders, and sound barriers, what is picked up in those processes? What is left behind? And what is created because of those sonic encounters?

Karma F. Frierson is a sociocultural anthropologist and assistant professor of Black Studies at the University of Rochester. Her forthcoming book, *Local Color: Reckoning with Blackness in the Port City of Veracruz*, is an ethnographic examination of how everyday people have transformed Blackness into a local trait rather than a racial identity as they internalize and embody the official discourse that the Gulf Coast city of Veracruz is both a cradle of Mexican Blackness and a part of the broader Afro-Andalusian Caribbean.

Teresita D. Lozano

University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

“Cómo un fantasma se aparece”: Corridos de Coyotes Fantasma as Repositories of Haunting, Transgenerational Trauma, and Undocumented Migrant Survival

Based on musical testimonies circulating social media, undocumented Mexican migrants are sharing a collective ghost story marked by themes of persecution, devotion, and survival centered on a miraculous apparition who migrants testify smuggles them across the U.S.-Mexico border.

Since 2007, this phenomenon of Mexican corrido composition, which I define as corridos de coyotes fantasma (“ghost smuggling ballads”), narrates the near-death experiences of migrants and their encounters with the ghost of Santo Toribio Romo. Santo Toribio Romo, who migrants have adopted as El Santo Coyote (The Holy Smuggler) and unofficial Patron of Immigrants – specifically of undocumented immigrants – was a priest killed in the highlands of Jalisco during La Cristiada, the 1926-1929 Cristero Rebellion. Cristeros were post-Revolutionary Mexican Catholic rebels who participated in an armed revolt against the Mexican government in response to the militant enforcement of anticlerical laws and perceived deliberate encroachment on religious liberty. The Catholic Church canonized Santo Toribio Romo in 2000 alongside other Cristero martyrs but has never recognized him as the patron of immigrants, a secondary canonization bestowed on Santo Toribio Romo by migrants whose devotion remains fortified by cyber-devotion. For example, for migrants unable to return on pilgrimage to Santo Toribio Romo’s shrine in Jalisco, corridos serve as musical votives that are then shared with other devotees and future migrants on YouTube, a space that defies geopolitical borders. Inspired by Derrida’s “hauntology” and contributing to theoretical discourse on immigration politics within migrant religious expression and transgenerational trauma encoded within survivors’ music, I analyze how these corridos transcend temporal and physical boundaries, marked by multiple layers of haunting beyond Santo Toribio’s ghostly intercessions. Furthermore, I explore how these corridos embody inherited cultural memory of trauma and injustices that extends to the current struggles of undocumented migrants.

Dr. Teresita Lozano is an Assistant Professor of Musicology and Ethnomusicology at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. A native of the El Paso, Texas – Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua borderland, she engages in research that explores the relationship between music, migration, religion, identity, and cultural memory. Her current monograph project centers on musical and religiopolitical manifestations of the undocumented migrant experience in the U.S.-Mexico transborder region. A passionate advocate for musical and community activism, she has served as a performer and Borderland music specialist for projects in public education and immigrant rights movements. She is an alumna of the Smithsonian Institution’s Latino Museum Studies Program where she worked in residence as a graduate fellow. She maintains a professional performance career as a flutist and vocalist in diverse global traditions. Dr. Lozano holds a BME from Baylor University and a Ph.D. in Ethnomusicology (Musicology) from the University of Colorado Boulder.

Global Music Ambassadorship and Cultural Diplomacy in the 21st Century

Global music ambassadorship and cultural diplomacy initiatives have often been used to leverage music as an instrument to foster international understanding and promote peace. The U.S. State Department has a long history in such endeavors stretching as far back as the legacy of Cold War-era jazz diplomacy up through the present. The following paper is a case study about similar initiatives by the award-winning Chicago-based global music group, Surabhi Ensemble, and how it uses music for cultural diplomacy in the 21st century. In collaboration with Sones de México Ensemble members, Juan Díes and Lorena Iñiguez, the Surabhi Ensemble embarked upon its own “Global Peace Tours” visiting the state of Oaxaca, Mexico, and most recently, India and Vietnam. Sponsored by the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, the Reva and David Logan Foundation, the Tourism Department of Huajuapán de León, and independent donors, the tours were meant to reflect the mission of the group, as well as local and government agencies.

Ronnie Malley is a Palestinian-American multi-instrumentalist musician, theatre maker, producer, and educator. He specializes in musical styles from the Middle East, North Africa, South Asia, and medieval Spain. Ronnie performs with many global artists and ensembles and has worked on award-winning plays, films, and TV series including the Broadway musical *The Band’s Visit*, the Netflix series *Mo*, and the film *Saffron Kingdom*. Ronnie received the 2023 Chamber Music America Michael Jaffee Visionary Award. He holds a BA in Global Music Studies from DePaul University and a MA in Languages (Arabic and Hebrew) from University of Chicago, where he is currently a 2nd year PhD student in Ethnomusicology.

Joseph Maurer

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Discourses of Folk and Art in Mariachi Education

Though many ethnomusicologists treat “folk” and “art” as outdated or unusable concepts, they retain symbolic power for people outside of music scholarship. This paper examines how discourses of “folk music” and “art music” are used to frame the meanings and purposes of mariachi education for parents and students in a Chicago mariachi academy. Embracing the theme of “Borderlands of Sonic Encounter,” this paper examines multiple overlapping sonic borders. First is the border between musical tradition as practiced and musical tradition as constructed for youth education programs. Second is the border between institutionalized US music education and the musics of immigrant communities. Third is the border between “folk” and “art,” which is challenged by the mariachi educators in this case study. These borders are crossed at times with ambivalence as both Mexican musical tradition and US music education system are mutually reshaped. This analysis closes by returning to the students at its heart, asking: What can be gained for young people’s musical lives by crossing these sonic borders?

Joe Maurer is a Lecturer in Music at MIT. He researches community music education—with a focus on Chicago’s immigrant music traditions—as well as maritime music revivalism and aesthetics in New England. His public and nonprofit-sector work includes research, strategic planning, curriculum development, and program evaluation for Chicago arts education organizations. He received a PhD in Ethnomusicology from the University of Chicago. Prior to his doctoral studies, Joe worked with high school students as a college access counselor in Providence, RI and Boston, MA.

Davindar Singh

Harvard University

“Shot On Barbed Wire”: Punjabi Undocumented Emigration, Self-Shot Musical Media, and Circulation Over And Against the US-Mexico Border

Seeking fortune and fleeing conflict, thousands of undocumented emigres from India’s Punjab province annually trek overland, through South America, to hazard the US-Mexico border.

Many Punjabi migrants film their crossings, often scoring these films with music and sending them to consociates in India. These controversial selfshot media, and related videos of Punjabi migrants languishing in jungles and internment camps, have subsequently entered music videos, films, and political campaigns both celebrating and critiquing migration. This presentation examines how Punjabi people remediate these different musical depictions of the US-Mexico border to serve distinct ends, at great spatial remove from the triumphs and deaths of migrants in American passage.

Changes in the formats and intertextual circulations of Punjabi migration media accompany changes in migration routes and politics. Though Punjabis have emigrated overland through Mexico since the 1920s, increasing after mid-1980s anti-Sikh genocides, overland routes grew costly after post-9/11 border restrictions. Self-shot musical media now convert newly-expensive border crossings into status symbols. Commercial music videos celebrating undocumented emigration both incorporate these status symbols and are subsequently soundtracks for them. However, full-length musical films rework self-shot media into laments for Punjabi youth killed in passage. Through modifying musical media, Punjabis contest both the US-Mexico Border and the ethics of migration.

Davindar Singh is a Presidential Scholar and PhD candidate in Ethnomusicology with a secondary field in Anthropology at Harvard University. His dissertation project “Cultures of Cargo: Illicit Patronage, Musical Media, and the Corruption of Punjabi Supply Chains” examines how people in Punjab, India, have used music since the colonial era to map, create, or combat patronage networks. His ethnographic work builds on 2.5 years of fieldwork to examine the criminalized political economy of such networks in village tractor and wrestling competitions, Sikh militancy, and the assassination of musicians. Punjabi undocumented emigration to work in American trucking is both a revenue source for these networks, and an effort to escape them. His research has been supported by Fulbright-Hays, the Mellon Foundation, the American Institute of Indian Studies, American Council on Education, and the Social Science Research Council. He has served on the Society for Ethnomusicology’s Council and Constitutional Committee, and co-chaired SEM’s Sound Studies Section and Economic Ethnomusicology SIG. He used to be a saxophonist.

Washington University, St. Louis

Cuando Me Pongo A Cantar: Cultivating Convivencia in Chicago's Pilsen Neighborhood

The Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago is a historical center of Mexican growth and expansion, flourishing despite decades of policies that have targeted immigration, housing, and education. The result of such a thriving Mexican population is a multitude of community centers dedicated to preserving the artistic traditions of Mexico for current and future generations. In this paper, I explore the tradition of Son Jarocho, a folk music originating in Veracruz, Mexico that is deeply rooted in community music-making and resistance. Son Jarocho-based organizations in Chicago work to generate solidarity and empowerment through the cultivation of *convivencia*, the driving social force of Veracruz and transnational Son Jarocho practices. Focusing on the 18th Street Casa de Cultura, a newly opened community center dedicated to cultivating the cultural and artistic expressions of Chicago's Mexican-Latino community, I draw from participation in an educational Son Jarocho workshop as well as interviews with performers and cultural workers. Ultimately, the Son Jarocho organizations I highlight in this paper create educational, collaborative spaces that strategically empower Mexican American communities, cultivate Mexican identity in Chicago, and build a more connected socio-political reality across the Mexican diaspora.

Ida Maria Tello is a first-year master's student in Musicology at Washington University in St. Louis. She received a bachelor's degree in music education from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where she developed an interest in Latin American musical performance, literature, and education. Ida's research focuses on how Mexican American communities create, transform, and produce music, and how these practices aid in preserving Mexican identity in the United States. Her recent work explores the practice of Son Jarocho – a musical genre from Veracruz, Mexico – in Chicago, and how the genre has served as a means for protest and political dissent. Other research interests include diasporic practices of Danza Azteca, as well as historical explorations of Chilean Nueva canción, Cuban Nueva trova, and Argentinian Nuevo tango.



Photograph of Tata Santiago Antonio, from the P'urhépecha village of Santa Fe de la Laguna, Michoacán.
Photo by Chris Batterman Cháirez. February 2024.

