

CHAPTER 40

NEW FACES IN OLD SPACES

Mexican American Musical Expressions and Music Equity within the Music Curriculum

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CONJUNTO music is a traditional folk music that originated in the borderlands of South Texas with roots from Mexico. It has become a symbol of pride and cultural identity for many Mexican Americans. As conjunto music spreads across the United States, it mirrors the migration of Mexican Americans, their assimilation into American society, and their acknowledgment and preservation of their cultural roots. This music is woven into the cultural fabric of Mexican American children and youth, with many of them singing along, dancing to, and performing conjunto music.

Mexican American children and youth have been challenged in their education and schooling owing to the gap between classroom instruction and the cultural and language complexities inherent in being Mexican American. Music is a space that is used to create and confirm one's cultural identity in ways that are strongly intertwined with language. As explained in this chapter, educating a child without reference to his or her culture and identity within the curriculum can have potential negative effects on minority students' learning, thus widening the gap between the identities of minority children and those of the dominant culture, which are portrayed in the curriculum and presented within the classroom. However, US schools often fail to acknowledge, let alone include, conjunto music in music instruction.

This chapter describes conjunto music as a vital part of Mexican American students' musical and cultural identities, reveals the various ways in which youth are interacting with this musical genre in their everyday lives, and offers suggestions for its inclusion in the music education curriculum. If structured more equitably with respect to the diversity of music found in the curriculum and classroom, music programs can attract more Mexican American or other children while also contributing to their overall academic success relative to their peers by strengthening their self-esteem and sense of personal and cultural identity.

WHO AM I? THE CONFLUENCE OF TWO MUSICAL CULTURES

As I flipped through old childhood pictures with my mother, I came across myself as a second grade child performing in a school program, dressed in a ballet folklorico dress with multicolored ribbons woven through my hair. My mother and I recounted musical experiences of my childhood while in school. During the time when my grandmother would take care of me, I enjoyed listening to her sing in Spanish many Mexican children's folk songs. Throughout elementary school, I was a ballet folklorico dancer during our annual Cinco de Mayo celebrations in the school district. My mother laughed as she pointed to another photo of me singing a Juan Gabriel song with a microphone in my hand. Juan Gabriel is a famous, internationally known Mexican composer and singer even to this day. I remember the cool breeze as I was about to fall asleep while standing outside my grandmother's window with my uncles and extended family preparing to serenade my grandmother with *Las Mañanitas* at midnight on her birthday. Throughout my childhood, I heard my mother singing along with the radio to many of her favorite Spanish pop tunes while she cleaned the house.

As I entered the sixth grade, the silver flute was calling my name. I enrolled in my middle school band and with much dedication and practice rose to the position of first chair flute player. After starting to listen and play Western concert band music, however, I could not quite make the connection between this new music that I was learning in school and the conjunto, *Tejano* (a modernized version of conjunto music), and mariachi music I listened to at home and at community events. As I continued my formal study of music at school, my home-and-family music began to feel less interesting to sing, listen, and dance to. Although sometimes confused about the musical connections in my life, I stayed in band through high school and rose to the position of drum major during my last years of school. Leadership experiences in the school music program confirmed my decision to become a band director. During those four years of high school, I *really* learned how to dance to conjunto and Tejano music. I had always known the basic moves and could manage a dance with my father or brother, but after many weekends filled with dancing I became quite good at it. My friends and I would often show up at a wedding in the local town hall just so we could dance to the great conjunto and Tejano groups that were hired to play.

After graduation, I left for college to pursue a music education degree and delved deeper into the Western music paradigm through my studies. I also experienced Ghanaian drumming through participation in an ensemble and traveled to Ghana after graduation. These few experiences stirred my desire to explore musical experiences outside the Western art music culture, leading eventually to graduate studies in ethnomusicology. This distanced me somewhat from my home culture and its music. As I shifted my doctoral studies to music education with an emphasis on the study of

world music pedagogy, I had to confront and reconcile the complexities of my musical identity and my long-held beliefs about music, especially “my” cultural music. I discovered that I was not alone either, in situating myself at the overlap of multiple musical identities.

Although I had grown up dancing and listening to many of the conjunto, Tejano, and mariachi songs, I still did not fully appreciate the music that surrounded me, the reason being that I was holding tightly to the American band culture into which I had been inducted in middle school. Graduate school, however, allowed the study of my musical culture, conjunto and Tejano music, and I was finally able to reconcile and reconnect my musical beliefs and sense of identity with my own cultural heritage.

While in graduate school in Washington, I was fortunate to have been able to participate in the Seattle Fandango Project, where I was able to play, sing, and dance to *son jarocho* (music from Veracruz, Mexico). Starting out as a university-community partnership with the University of Washington, this community music group brought in guest musicians to teach this music and tradition to university faculty, students, and members of the local community. Even though it was not the music that I had grown up with, it was similar in language and the use of various instruments and thus was familiar to me. There were moments at these rehearsals and music lessons when I felt more in tune with the music (and the essence of being a musician) than I had ever felt sitting in a concert band rehearsal or concert. I was able to witness young children discovering their own heritage, who could out-dance and out-play some of the adults in the group, thus developing their musical skills in this genre.

These musical experiences and conversations in Spanish would transport me back home and would bring tears to my eyes. I had initially left the Rio Grande Valley, trying to escape my Mexican heritage on a quest to become assimilated and educated, and to feel superior to my community. I had always felt that the music of my culture was not important—not good enough. It was I, however, who was misinformed. How ironic that the farther away I got from my culture, the more I longed for and appreciated it.

NEW FACES IN OLD SPACES: CHANGING SCHOOL POPULATIONS

Mexican Americans are the largest group within the US Hispanic population classification, and many school populations (especially in California, Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona) consist of a Mexican American majority (Garcia, 2004; US Census Bureau, 2010). The school classroom demographics are changing rapidly in both urban and rural school districts. “More than half of the growth in the total population of the United States between 2000 and 2010 was due to the increase in the Hispanic population” (Ennis, Rios-Vargas, & Albert, 2011, p. 2). Hispanics of Mexican origin increased

54 percent from 20.6 million in 2000 to 31.8 million in 2010. Hispanics, as the largest student minority population, accounted for 22 percent of students who were enrolled in public school in the United States for the 2009–2010 school year. Mexican and Mexican American students are becoming a larger presence in our music classrooms, and therefore educators should understand and take into account in their curricular decisions the musical and ethnic complexities of these students.

Numerous educational models have been explored and implemented to allow for the success of bilingual Mexican American students, particularly those born in Mexico or into families who continue the language, customs, and values of Mexican cities and communities. However, in a review of Mexican American students' educational achievement scores, Garcia (2004) found that they are overrepresented among the nation's least successful students, scoring far lower on standardized tests and having higher dropout rates than other ethnic groups. In addition, they are underrepresented among students who are receiving bachelor, graduate, and professional degrees. Garcia also noted that the data from first grade are "a powerful reminder that the achievement patterns for all racial/ethnic groups are basically established in the early years of school," because the achievement levels did not undergo significant change between the early primary grades and grade 12 (p. 494).

Early goals of multicultural education were centered on the process of "Americanization," which was intended to assimilate small ethnic and linguistically diverse communities into a single dominant national institutional structure and culture. Valdés (1996) and Garcia (2001b) have argued that this is still the goal of many multicultural education programs aimed at Mexican American students (cited in Garcia, 2004, p. 498). Most often, bilingual programs use a student's native language as a bridge to learn the mainstream language and usually do not include content integration centered on promoting and respecting the historical and cultural contributions associated with the secondary language (Trueba, 1987). A significant part of the problem is that there is no single approach to the education of Mexican American students within multicultural and music education programs. Nevertheless, and despite the many challenges involved in accommodating their musical needs, Mexican American students deserve to have a school community that fosters, respects, and incorporates their personal and cultural values into the curriculum while receiving opportunities for success in those educational settings. As British sociologist of education Basil Bernstein (2000) cautions, in a democratic society, students in state schools have a right be included "socially, intellectually, culturally and personally" into the school community and curriculum, as when lacking that their education may suffer (p. xx). In the United States, a socially just music education curriculum needs to include a space in which Mexican American students' language, culture, and musical practices can be validated and held in the same regard as other musics. Yet, thus far, and despite the use of Spanish-language songs and attention to the mariachi genre in schools, conjunto music often remains ignored in music curricula, despite its popularity among many Mexican Americans.

SOUNDSCAPES OF MEXICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS

As Shelemay (2001) posited, soundscapes of a grand variety are found across the world, each a product of people's meaning-making within their environments. The multiple and overlapping soundscapes are sometimes found in children's lives, too, as they are exposed to musical expressions within their elementary schools, their home lives, and in the communities that enable them to construct or retain their musical and ethnic identities. Music serves as an important vehicle in the creation of one's identity because it is a means of communication that can unite people and can represent a significant part of their cultural legacy. Therefore, it is important to evaluate the curriculum content and methods of transmission in the music classroom, in this case as they relate to Mexican Americans.

There is a wealth of Spanish-language music available to American music teachers, much of it developed alongside the growth of the multicultural music education movement of the last quarter-century. The popular and most widely used American music textbooks for elementary and secondary music classes all have some component related to Spanish-language, Mexican, and Mexican American music traditions (Feay-Shaw, 2001).

Mariachi music has rapidly spread into schools, particularly at the secondary level, in the past 10 years. A mariachi music program would seem to be an important means of facilitating a bimusical identity among those students who may come to school with American mainstream musical experience but no experience in this Mexican and Mexican American genre (or vice versa), as well as supporting the presence of bicultural and bilingual education in schools. Mariachi affords a sense of cultural pride, self-esteem, and social acceptance for Mexican Americans in that it may be part of their personal or family cultural identity. For many students, mariachi is the music of their homeland, or of their parents' and grandparents' earlier experiences while growing up in Mexico. Many second- and third-generation Mexican American students may respond to the sound and social meaning of the genre, and therefore its inclusion in school programs may attract a student population that has often been ignored in the traditional school music program (Boss-Barba & Soto, 2008). School mariachi ensemble programs can thus be seen as a form of culturally responsive pedagogy because they are based on students' own cultural knowledge and their previous experiences while allowing their learning outcomes to be culturally, socially, and musically relevant and effective for them in and outside school (Gay, 2010).

Yet, despite a wealth of materials, including publications for teaching mariachi and Spanish-language songs of Mexican and Mexican American cultures, attention to the popular regional musical genre conjunto in schools is nearly nil. Nor is there literature that addresses the bicultural, bilingual, and bimusical realities of children of Mexican

heritage in American school music programs. Music educators are instead teaching without reference to or knowledge of the musical, cultural, and linguistic experiences that Mexican American children bring to school.

CONJUNTO MUSIC

Conjunto was developed in the Rio Grande Valley and in various other cities in South Texas in the 1920s and 1930s. In Spanish, *conjunto* refers to a “group” or “ensemble.” This ensemble centers on the music of the accordion; it came into its own recognizable form after World War II in 1935 (Pena, 1985, p. 2). Even though this folk music has musical roots from Mexico, it is one of the few musical genres that originated in the United States. As this author has recently explained elsewhere, “Today, conjunto music can be heard on car stereos, in concert and dance halls, weddings, quinceañeras, community festivals, Hispanic holiday celebrations, bars, music festivals, and community music schools. It has become a symbol of pride and cultural identity for *Tejanos*, which is Spanish for Texas Mexicans” (Soto, 2013, p. 282). The social nature of dancing, which is a key element of this musical genre, has been credited for keeping it alive today (Margolies, 2011).

The ensemble consists of four instruments: a diatonic button accordion, a *bajo sexto* (12-string guitar), guitar or bass guitar, and drums. Conjunto music combines a Mexican repertoire of *rancheras* (traditional folk songs performed by one singer with guitar), *cumbias* (based on a Columbian dance rhythm), *huq pangos* (based on the rhythmic style of the Son Huasteco genre), *danzones* (originating from Cuban dances), and *boleros* (a form of Spanish or Cuban slow dance) with polkas and waltzes borrowed from the Czech, Polish, and German immigrants that migrated to South Texas. Once hailed as the “music of the working class,” conjunto music moved out of the fields and out of working-class neighborhoods and became part of the Mexican American soundscape through the expansion of radio stations devoted to the genre, album sales, performance venues, and festivals that were created across South Texas and various parts of the country.

Conjunto music migrated out of South Texas by following Mexican American migrants who worked in various locations across the country and touring musicians who have spread this music to communities around the world. This music has also crossed musical genres with prominent musicians performing and recording albums with rock, pop, country, jazz, and R & B groups in the United States.

Student Interactions with Conjunto Music

Students are interacting with the conjunto music tradition in a variety of ways within and outside the traditional school music programs, both at the primary and secondary levels and in higher education. These interactions reveal the cultural connection and

pride associated with a music genre that is an integral part of their cultural and family soundscape as they perform in public events, regional festivals, and paid private performances. Young children in the elementary school grades are participating in these ensembles by singing, dancing, and playing instruments like the accordion, drum set, or the *bajo sexto* (12-string guitar). Middle and high school students are participating in school-run ensembles or performing this music with their friends and family outside the school day. Tejanos are reclaiming the musical soundscape within the traditional music classroom and are following the inroads that were created through the mariachi music programs that were established long before.

Administrators, teachers, students, and community members are supporting the local music tradition and feel that it is important that this musical tradition continue through the next generation. Parents of the students who play in the San Benito School District's conjunto music program in South Texas, for example, formed a booster club to raise money for instruments, uniforms, and travel expenses for the school ensembles. Another parent whose daughter plays the *bajo sexto* emphasized the need for support: "If our kids like what they're doing, we want to support them. It's to bring tradition so they can have this in their future. These are our roots" (Del Valle, 2013, para. 11).

Participating in the Family Band

While teaching music in a bilingual elementary school in the Yakima Valley of Eastern Washington, I was able to get a sense of the musical soundscape with which the students were interacting outside the classroom. Students often spoke of family members who sang in a musical group, or played musical instruments like the guitar, accordion, and saxophone. One young student had much to say about her participation in her father's band, a conjunto group, proudly sharing her love of singing and of the frequency with which she and her siblings would sing ("almost every night"). I visited this student, named Linda, at her family home during one of her father's band practices, and was accompanied by my colleague, who later wrote of aspects of the experience (Lum & Campbell, 2009). Linda was singing while also playing on a miniature drum set complete with a small-sized snare drum, bass drum, and cymbals. Linda and her father learned together how to play the instruments and repertoire of the conjunto and other musical genres such as *banda* (a brass-based music that originated in Sinaloa, Mexico, that included elements of German and Polish polka music) informally, without private lessons, school instruction, or any other prior performance or formal instructional experience. According to Linda, her father's band members also learned how to play their instruments by listening to the radio or to the CD player and then imitating the music that they had internalized. Sometimes they could play through a song because of their familiarity with it well in advance of the rehearsal with the melody, its harmonies, rhythmic features, and sung texts, and at other times they would listen together to a piece, play and sing, listen again, check and correct themselves, and continue to "play it forward." Linda's father's band members consisted of cousins and work colleagues

who rehearsed weekly, and even more frequently than that when preparing for performances at weddings, *quinceañeras* (a traditional Mexican celebration of the milestone coming-of-age fifteenth birthday), and various parties.

After a brief interaction in the living room of Linda's family home, we were invited to their makeshift band studio in the basement while the band warmed up and then played a few tunes. Linda played on the miniature drum set right alongside the adult band while her younger brother Alex, who was five years old, played a child-sized accordion (even though he could only figure out how to play a single drone). Alex was moving his hands and arms back and forth in imitation of the accordionist in his father's band. Linda was soon invited to join the band in singing "El Camaleon" (The Chameleon), a well-known banda piece by the group Los Diferentes de la Sierra. She sang with a light and tuneful voice, and she knew every word (even the fast rap-like sections). She did not shy away from the task but seemed completely in control in singing with the adult musicians. Linda's father wanted her to learn as many songs as she wished and to perform, singing with the group at various locations.

Performing in the School Conjunto Ensemble

For the past five years, the La Joya School District in South Texas has held an annual Conjunto Festival at the school's Performing Arts Center that allows each conjunto ensemble from the three high schools in the district to perform. This annual festival allows student groups to share the stage with well-known performers and local legends in the area who, between performances, share stories of their personal relationships with this musical genre. There are three student conjunto groups, Palmview High School's La Tradicion, Juarez-Lincoln High School's Sol, and La Joya High School's Los Diamantes, that have been showcased at the festival. The conjunto program began in 2000 and has about 75 students in the intermediate and varsity music programs (Conjunto Traditions, 2011). The ensembles were initially established as extracurricular activities or clubs, but have now become part of the school curriculum, with students receiving school credit. Mario Saenz, Jr., who has been playing conjunto music since he was 13 years old and has worked with the conjunto groups in the school district, observed, "It's been giving other kids a chance that aren't in mariachi or folklorico or football to do something" (Conjunto Traditions, 2011, para. 15). The student musicians gain recognition by performing with esteemed artists during the festival, as well as by performing original songs, recording their own records, and competing in statewide accordion competitions. Some of the student groups include siblings or cousins, as this music tradition is transmitted through extended families. Omar Garza, a conjunto student musician, obtained statewide recognition when he became a finalist for the Texas Big Squeeze competition and recorded an album, *Accordion Kings & Queens Live*, with great conjunto artists such as Flaco Jimenez, Los Texamaniacs, Dora & Her Zydeco Entourage, Ennis Czech Boys, three other contest finalists, and Big Squeeze champion Peter Anzaldúa. Peter was interviewed for an article in the local paper about his musical experiences at school and was quoted as saying, "It's

cool because you get to hang out with your friends and play new music everyday, I love music. It's in my blood" (Conjunto Traditions, 2011, para. 25).

Conjunto in the Curriculum

Conjunto music can be incorporated into a music curriculum and/or music program through a variety of methods. Recordings, interviews with musicians, documentaries, and videos of performances can easily introduce the musical essence of conjunto, and allow students an in-depth look into the people and culture behind this music (Soto, 2008). Lesson plans, recordings, and videos can be accessed on the Smithsonian Folkways website (www.folkways.si.edu). Public Broadcasting Service television produced a documentary on the history of the conjunto, with a focus on the accordion, titled *Accordion Dreams* (Galán, 2001). *Tex Mex: Music of the Texas-Mexican Borderlands* (Marre, 1990) and *Songs of the Homeland* (Galán, 1995) videos also showcase the variety of musics in the borderlands of South Texas.

Reviewing a selection of earlier recordings by Narcisco Martinez (the father of conjunto music) and making a place for an experience with the virtuosity of master accordionist Eva Ybarra are effective means for exploring the genre's stylistic and musical changes, while also coming to terms with the changes in social roles within conjunto, especially with regard to women performers. Listening to recordings can open the door to a whole host of classroom activities. Musical elements such as meter, key, tempo, harmony, syncopation, and vocal timbres can all be explored through repeated listenings. Students can learn to sing the chorus or sing along to an entire conjunto song in Spanish. Song forms such as the cumbia, ranchera, or polka can be analyzed and compared to other Latino musical genres that utilize them. Instrumentation and stylistic features of playing can also be examined through recordings. For example, the role of the 12-stringed *bajo sexto* today has changed from that of early performances, as have performance practices and types of accordions utilized. The use of accordion in conjunto and other musical genres can also be investigated, as can the influences of other genres such as the German, Czech, and Polish waltzes, polkas, and cumbia. Students can study how conjunto evolved into the more contemporary genre Tejano and explore the differences in performance practices and instrumentation. Information about immigration, acculturation, the challenges of straddling two cultures and countries, racism, working in the fields picking crops, family concerns or memories, and important historical events can be found within the thousands of conjunto songs that can be obtained and translated on sites such as Smithsonian Folkways, and connected with interdisciplinary lessons that expand a traditional music lesson (Soto, 2008).

With a bit of research, teachers and students can investigate methods of transmission among conjunto artists. An assessment of students' musical abilities and musicians in the community may reveal artists who may conduct interviews, lecture demonstrations, or offer to assist in instructing a student ensemble. Students can learn how to dance the basic cumbia dance steps. This popular driving dance rhythm originated in Columbia

with influences from Africa, and is heard in duple meter. Students can also learn to dance the simple two-step movements (similar to country dancing) coupled with turns that accompany the music. Allowing time and resources for a student ensemble within the music program provides opportunities for students to fully interact with the music so that they may come to know their own musical culture that surrounds them, or to learn of a musical culture that may be far from their own. A conjunto ensemble in the music program should share time, resources, recognition, and performance opportunities equally among the other established ensembles in the music program.

NEW SPACES: SOCIAL EQUITY IN THE MUSIC EDUCATION CLASSROOM

Anderson and Campbell (2011) state that in order for us to carry out the National Association of Music Educators (NAfME) slogan that music is for every child, "school curriculum must be more broadly defined to encompass the ethnic diversity of American schools and society" (p. vii). Just as multicultural education reconceptualizes the curriculum to include diverse ethnic and cultural perspectives, music curriculum should incorporate a diversity of musics and musical practices in all grade levels and categories of music education (Abril, 2009). Teachers should also diversify their methods of delivery and curriculum, which can reflect the variety of music and modes of transmission that children encounter every day through the media, technology, and their home cultures. Calderón (2009) helps to explain this point with the admonishment to teachers that it is essential that marginalized students learn the knowledge and skills that will allow students to be successful both within and outside their home cultures. Similarly, Ladson-Billings (2009) states that African Americans should be able to choose academic excellence while still identifying with their African American culture. This notion should be applied to the music curriculum so that Mexican American and other minority students are able to develop relevant academic and musical excellence while identifying with their home cultures.

It is evident that Mexican American communities are encouraging children to develop their ethnic identities through knowledge of their heritage, language, and culture, including musical practices (Soto, 2012). The research suggests that these children are entering the music classroom with musical skills and knowledge that may not be acknowledged or valued within the mainstream culture, or that may not be related to the music that is taught in the common curriculum for general music, concert band, choir, and/or orchestra (Soto, 2012; Teicher, 1995). The danger in ignoring or overlooking this important aspect of children's ethnic and cultural identity is that it might be perceived as akin to what Anzaldúa (2007) describes as a form of "linguistic terrorism" that may make children feel ashamed because their language is not validated. As Anzaldúa continues,

So if you want to really hurt me, talk badly about my language. Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity—I am my language. Until I can take pride in my language, I cannot take pride in myself. Until I can accept as legitimate Chicano Texas Spanish, Tex-Mex and all the other languages I speak, I cannot accept the legitimacy of myself. Until I am free to write bilingually and to switch codes without having always to translate, while I still have to speak English or Spanish when I would rather speak Spanglish, and as long as I have to accommodate the English speakers rather than having them accommodate me, my tongue will be illegitimate. I will no longer be made to feel ashamed of existing. (p. 81)

Anzaldúa's comment about language and ethnic identity applies equally to music, which is also a form of communication and thus also a twin skin to both linguistic and ethnic identity. Thus, if teachers are not validating children's musical identities in the music classroom or music education program, are they sending negative messages to their students, causing them to feel ashamed of their bimusical (or multimusical) skill sets, or making them feel that music associated with their ethnic identities is illegitimate? Would the exclusion of their favored music make them feel or believe that they are less musical, or not legitimate musicians, because they are not valued within the school system and larger community? If children cannot take pride in the music that surrounds them in their everyday lives, can they take pride in being called "real" musicians?

This chapter has presented various ways in which Mexican American music and culture could be reflected in the music curriculum to create a more socially just classroom. As also suggested, similar ideas and strategies, however, could be applied to the music of other marginalized groups and cultures that are present in the school and surrounding community. Younker and Hickey (2007) advocate that teachers conceive of the pursuit of social justice "as arising from a community of learners, [as] a participatory democratic community in which opportunities for opinions, informed decisions, and justifications are understood and experienced," and in which students learn that traditions "preserve what is, and do not necessarily call for critical examination, nor demand progressive thinking" (p. 226). It is with this understanding that music educators and researchers should go forth to evaluate the curriculum and content delivery of music in classrooms if they are to strive for a socially just classroom.

OLD FACES IN OLD SPACES: BACK TO WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

As I come full circle in my journey as a person and music educator, I am now guiding teachers in the incorporation of conjunto, Tejano, mariachi, son jarocho, and the music of other cultures into their music classrooms, even as I gain a better understanding and respect for the music of my own culture.

Children who are of a different generation of Mexican Americans are trying to understand their own cultural identity and to assimilate within mainstream American culture. This can be done in many ways, but it is always done with music. People have the music of "home" and of "family," which represents their personal and ethnic identities. I have held close to my own musical identity throughout my research. I do not want Mexican American children to struggle with their identity the way I did while in school. My desire is for the culturally relevant music (and language and culture) to be validated in the music classroom and surrounding communities. Music teachers must be guided to identify and understand how integral music is in the lives of students so they can learn to appreciate their heritage music alongside the music of the world's many cultures. Like my own adult reckoning with the music of my home and my formal training, Mexican American children can be knowledgeable and skillful with their first home or cultural music as well as the music they come to learn in school.

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