Decolonizing Strategies in Ethnomusicology, Teaching, and Performance

Perspectives from the US Southwest and Latin America

Society for Ethnomusicology Pre-Conference Symposium Wednesday November 14, 2018

Introduction

In conjunction with the Society for Ethnomusicology Annual Meeting, the University of New Mexico John Donald Robb Trust, the UNM Music Department, and the SEM Latin American and Caribbean Music Section present the pre-conference symposium: *Decolonizing Strategies in Ethnomusicology, Teaching, and Performance: Perspectives from the US Southwest and Latin America.*

This topic will allow us to address not only decoloniality and decolonization as *concepts* but, most importantly, as *praxis*. We understand decolonization as an ongoing project and acknowledge the complexities and tensions of the term, as well as the different epistemologies produced when it is used in different languages. By bringing together a group of scholars, pedagogues, activists, and creative artists from across Latin America and the US Southwest, we will engage in a hemispheric conversation that takes into account the multiple perspectives of epistemological and performative decolonialities.

This symposium consists of an initial roundtable centered on decolonizing strategies in ethnomusicology followed by two shorter sessions: the first focusing on decolonizing pedagogies and the second on performance and activism. These sessions take place at the Hotel Albuquerque, the SEM conference venue. The symposium concludes with *Música del Corazón: Una velada nueueomexicana* (Music from the Heart: An Evening of New Mexican Music), a music event including a varied medley of old and new musical genres including ballads (*romancero*), an ever-evolving lyric tradition (*cancionero*), hybrid Indo-Hispano music (*inditas*), overlays of styles and vougues from 18th- and 19th-century instrumental dance music, locally adapted *música ranchera*, and contemporary local strains of pop music. This *velada*, underwritten by the UNM John Donald Robb Trust, is curated by UNM Distinguished Professor Emeritus Enrique Lamadrid and takes place at the National Hispanic Cultural Center. Transportation to the NHCC is provided to registered participants.

All activities within the symposium are free of charge and open to the public.
### Schedule of Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>EVENTS (held at Hotel Albuquerque unless indicated otherwise)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00-9:30</td>
<td><strong>Opening Remarks</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30-12:00</td>
<td><strong>Roundtable – Decolonizing Ethnomusicology</strong>&lt;br&gt;Moderator: Juan Eduardo Wolf (University of Oregon)&lt;br&gt;Panelists: Angela Lühring (Universidade Federal da Bahia, Salvador, Brasil), Alejandro L. Madrid (Cornell University), Cathy Ragland (University of North Texas), Brenda M. Romero (University of Colorado Boulder), Carolina Santamaría Delgado (Universidad de Antioquia, Medellín, Colombia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00-13:30</td>
<td><strong>Lunch Break</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:30-14:45</td>
<td><strong>Roundtable – Decolonizing Pedagogies in Ethnomusicology: Challenges from the Borderlands</strong>&lt;br&gt;Moderator: León F. García Corona (Northern Arizona University)&lt;br&gt;Panelists: Andrés R. Amado Pineda (University of Texas Rio Grande Valley), León F. García Corona (Northern Arizona University), Lauryn Salazar (Texas Tech University), Amanda C. Soto (Texas State University)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:45-15:30</td>
<td><strong>Coffee Break (Sponsored by LACSEM)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:30-16:45</td>
<td><strong>Performance and Discussion – Decolonizing Performance: Protest and Community-Building through Experimental Music</strong>&lt;br&gt;Moderator: Ana R. Alonso Minutti (University of New Mexico)&lt;br&gt;Performers/organizers Albuquerque-based Gatas y Vatas festival: Autumn Chacon (visual artist, performer), Marisa Demarco (journalist, musician), Monica Demarco (music educator, performer, social worker), Antonia Montoya (health educator, musician, social activist)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:45-19:00</td>
<td><strong>Dinner Break</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19:30-21:30</td>
<td><strong>Concert – Música del Corazón: Una velada nuevomexicana</strong>&lt;br&gt;National Hispanic Cultural Center&lt;br&gt;Curator: Enrique Lamadrid (University of New Mexico)&lt;br&gt;Moderators: Ana R. Alonso Minutti, Enrique Lamadrid&lt;br&gt;Featured artists: David F. García, Gregorio Gonzales, Lone Piñón, Lara Manzanares, Jerome Martínez, Frank McCulloch, Brenda Romero</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Symposium coordinator:** Ana R. Alonso Minutti (LAC Co-Chair). **Panel co-ordinators:** León F. García Corona (SEM Council Secretary) and Juan Eduardo Wolf (LACSEM Chair). **Música del Corazón: Una velada nuevomexicana coordinator:** Enrique Lamadrid.
Roundtable – Decolonizing Ethnomusicology

According to theorist Walter Mignolo (2011), global politics has three possible ways of continuing to unfold: Westernization, Dewesternization, and Decolonialization. Our academic disciplines are generally rooted in the history of Western thought, and reinforcing disciplinary divides can also reinforce colonial ways of thinking. Within these disciplinary divisions, ethnomusicologists have often envisioned Dewesternization as part of their mission, valuing the musical knowledge production of non-Western spaces. Advocates of Decolonization, however, recognize that global knowledges based on a Western-Dewestern binary are necessarily linked, since one defines the other. To enact change, we must employ alternate ways of thinking, uncoupled from this binary. For Mignolo, new global systems must be envisioned from a lived experience of liminality, what he calls “border thinking.” Other scholars offer (or even demand) alternate approaches. Anti-colonial activist Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, for example, prefers ch’ixi (stained or motley) thought, recognizing that similar practices among different groups within a society may emerge from different foundations. This roundtable brings together five scholars to consider how ethnomusicology might contribute to these alternate ways of thinking. The scholars might address questions such as:

- If undisciplinarity is key to decolonization, what do we do with “ethnomusicology” as an institution or system of knowledge production?
- What does a decolonizing ethnomusicology do?
- How might SEM transform itself to affect decolonizing ethnomusicologies?
- What are the implications of these actions to the larger institutions and systems of knowledge production that ethnomusicology has historically been a part of?

Each scholar will offer fifteen minutes of preliminary thoughts with the rest of the session dedicated to what promises to be a lively discussion about the future direction of our field.

Roundtable – Decolonizing Pedagogies in Ethnomusicology: Challenges from the Borderlands

Ethnomusicology carries, within its core, pedagogical strategies rooted in western epistemologies. Moving away from these historical ways of learning and teaching as central pieces of our ethnomusicological endeavors has proven a significant challenge. Though ethnomusicology has played a crucial role in opening spaces for new pedagogies, current music programs tend to revert to what Alejandro L. Madrid refers to as tokenism (2017) without really exploring the structures of power in place and the challenges it would take to overcome those. These challenges appear even more daunting in the borderlands, where ethnomusicologists continue to work as a peripheral
addition to the musical pedagogical establishment among populations of students who pursue an education that embraces not only diversity in the classroom but in its pedagogical approaches. In this roundtable, scholars/pedagогues will address ways in which we can propel a paradigm shift away from tokenism. Some of the guiding questions for discussion are:

- Why is it particularly important to decolonize pedagogies in ethnomusicology in the borderlands?
- In what ways can local cultures from the borderlands contribute to this decolonization?
- How can we convey the importance of decolonizing pedagogies in ethnomusicology to our colleagues?
- How can the current state of US politics serve (or not serve) as a platform for this discussion?

After each panelist shares their thoughts for about 10-15 minutes, the session will be opened up for discussion.

**Performance and Discussion – Decolonizing Performance: Protest and Community-Building through Experimental Music**

In the US Southwest, performers are embracing bold cross-genre practices from various fields as part of Gatas y Vatas, a homegrown music and art festival born in Albuquerque. When experimenting on stage, performers at Gatas y Vatas ignore conventions and boundaries drawn around disciplines by institutions and traditions. Organizers’ decade-long efforts grew this community, sparking new performances and galvanizing collaborations throughout the region. The festival’s 2017 iteration called for works of protest, and more than forty-five visual artists and performers responded to that call, using their bodies, voices, and electronic expertise to investigate and amplify the consequences of US policies and politics on their lives and communities. Using sound as a tool to transform space, they drew connections between themselves and other people present in the room, whose own physical presence is enlisted in the performers’ work. For this session of performance and discussion, four organizers/performers from Gatas y Vatas will activate a new node in a community network built over time. Some questions that will guide the discussion are:

- What is it like to create in a region where there are few barriers but also little infrastructure?
- How do performers dealing in abstraction explode concrete oppressions?
- How can artistic and musical movements evade the imposition of category and genre while still remaining accessible?
- How is community building—and the act of changing the on-stage demographics in a region by creating an outpost for experimental work—an act of protest?

Each presenter will perform a 10-minute set after which there will be a panel discussion and Q & A.
Bios of Symposium Participants

Ana R. Alonso Minutti is associate professor of music and faculty affiliate of the Latin American and Iberian Institute at the University of New Mexico. Her research interests include music traditions from Mexico and the US-Mexico border, experimental and avant-garde expressions, music history pedagogy, intersectionality, feminism, religion, and decolonial methodologies. She is coeditor of *Experimentalisms in Practice: Music Perspectives from Latin America* (Oxford UP, 2018), and her book *Mario Lavista and Musical Cosmopolitanism in Late Twentieth-Century Mexico* is under contract by Oxford UP. She holds degrees from the Universidad de las Américas, Puebla (BA), and the University of California, Davis (MA, PhD).

Andrés R. Amado Pineda specializes in the study of music from Latin America and US Latinxs. He has published articles, encyclopedic and dictionary entries, and book chapters as author, co-author, and translator, and has presented papers at numerous regional, national, and international conferences in musicology, ethnomusicology, cultural studies, and Latin American studies. Drawing from ethnographic and historical research methodologies, his work covers subjects such as Guatemalan marimba music, Guatemalan 19th-century sacred music, and music in the US-Mexico borderlands. He currently teaches music history and ethnomusicology at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.

Autumn Chacon is Diné (Navajo Nation) on her mother’s side, and Chicana on her father’s side, and identifies as both. She is from Albuquerque, New Mexico and from an early age she has been an active community organizer for the advancement of Native American Rights, Environmental Justice, and Media Rights and Access; her art reflects the same values. Chacon has shown work domestically and abroad, in the mediums of sound and performance. Other work in the form of electronic installation allows audiences to participate in how much of the piece they would like to receive. Chacon considers herself a modern-day storyteller, and her activism, art, and community involvement often mesh.
**Marisa Demarco** founded Gatas y Vatas music and art festival in 2010. A lifelong performer and musician, her work blends worn handmade electronics with voice, and centers on visual themes. She has traveled to stages around the United States and beyond. She also founded Milch de la Máquina, a performance art troupe, and she is a member of experimental ensemble the Death Convention Singers. Her compositional work has been featured in the John Donald Robb Composers’ Symposium. She studies experimental art and technology at the University of New Mexico, and she is a news reporter at KUNM Radio.

**Monica Demarco** is a composer from Albuquerque, New Mexico. She received her degrees in piano performance and theory/composition from the University of New Mexico. Artistically, Monica finds herself exploring the purpose and practice of human ritual and spirituality. Her music varies wildly from her experience as a virtuoso pianist with a love of barbarism and mysticism to her work in contemporary rock and experimental noise. Monica is a music educator and owns Vivace Music Piano Studio in Albuquerque, and is currently in pursuit of a master’s degree in social work at New Mexico Highlands University.

**León F. García Corona** is assistant professor of ethnomusicology at Northern Arizona University. He worked as a content producer and education specialist for the Smithsonian Institution, where he was the founder and managing editor of *Folkways Magazine*. His research covers connections between politics, economics, and music sentimentalism, world music pedagogy, and career development in ethnomusicology. His current co-authored book project explores challenges and opportunities in ethnomusicology. He has also directed ensembles and world music workshops as a guest lecturer at the University of Washington, University of Michigan, Pennsylvania State University, and the University of Idaho.
Enrique Lamadrid is Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Spanish at the University of New Mexico, where he taught folklore, literature, and cultural history. Research interests include ethnopoetics, folklore and music, and borderlands cultural history. He edits the Querencias Series at UNM Press which published *Hotel Mariachi: Urban Space and Cultural Heritage in Los Angeles* (International Latino Book Award 2014). Lamadrid’s research on Indo-Hispano music and culture includes *Hermanitos Comanchitos: Indo-Hispano Rituals of Captivity and Redemption* (Chicago Folklore Prize 2003) and the anthology, *Nación Genízara: Ethnogenesis, Place, and Cultural Identity in NM* (UNM Press 2019). The Américo Paredes Prize recognized his cultural activism and curatorial projects.

Angela Lühning (PhD, Freie Universität Berlin, 1989) is professor of ethnomusicology at the Music School of the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA). She works primarily on Afro-Brazilian culture (traditional/urban/media) and her work includes research on historical recordings, Brazilian musical diversity and epistemologies, as well as training educators in the field of contemporary musical practices in Afro-Brazilian urban communities. She is also active at the Pierre Verger Foundation (Salvador/Bahia) working with the local communities around the institution and has published books and articles about all these subjects.

Alejandro L. Madrid is a cultural theorist whose historical, ethnographic, and critical work focuses on music and expressive culture from Latin America and Latinos in the United States. Working at the intersection of musicology, ethnomusicology, and performance studies, his work explores questions of transnationalism, diaspora, and migration; homophobia, masculinity, and embodied culture; and historiography, narrative, and alternative ways of knowledge production in music from the twentieth century. Madrid is the author of more than half a dozen books for which he has received numerous national and international awards. He is professor of musicology and ethnomusicology at Cornell University.
Antonia Montoya, MS, CHES is a health educator, musician and social activist. For over twenty years she has successfully facilitated professional and personal development with an emphasis on strengths-based behavior change. Antonia has presented her meaningful and evidence-based work to international, national and state conferences. She is all about gratitude and her passion project is ourgratitudecollective.com, a gratitude sharing site that she founded and pours her creative energy into every day. A performing musician for 14 years playing upright bass and singing in local bands, she currently goes by Alonerly taking the stage alone as she loops layers and layers of upright bass, vocals and electronic beats.

Cathy Ragland is associate professor of ethnomusicology at the University of North Texas, College of Music, Division of Music History, Theory and Ethnomusicology. She is editor of the series Sonic Crossings for the University of North Texas Press and author of the book Música Norteña: Mexican Migrants Creating a Nation between Nations. Her ethnographic research and writing focuses on music, performance, and the politics of identity and inclusion, particularly among immigrant communities. Her work as a journalist, folklorist, and applied ethnomusicologist collaborating with community partners on large- and small-scale public arts projects in US cities (NYC, DFW, Seattle), in rural South Texas and the borderlands, and in northeastern Mexico informs her scholarly perspective.

Brenda M. Romero is professor of ethnomusicology and chair of musicology at the University of Colorado in Boulder. She is a renowned scholar and performer of New Mexico’s indita ballads and other historical regional folk music. She played violin for the Pueblo of Jemez Matachina and trained younger musicians to carry on the tradition. As a graduate student in theory and composition at UNM, she worked closely with the Robb Archives of Southwestern Music. She is coeditor of Dancing across Borders: Danzas y bailes mexicanos (University of Illinois Press, 2009) and is currently completing the book, Matachines, Transcultural Creativity and Renewal in the Americas (University of Illinois Press, forthcoming).
Lauryn Salazar is an assistant professor of musicology and director of the mariachi program at Texas Tech University. Her research focuses on the mariachi tradition in the United States and Mexico. She is a practicing mariachi musician performing on the mariachi harp and is a member of the all-female, two-time Grammy award-winning Mariachi Divas. Her participation in recording and writing the liner notes for the 2016 Album Tributo a Joan Sebastian y Rigoberto Alfaro earned her a Grammy nomination. She recently served as a cultural advisor on the Oscar and Golden Globe winning Disney Pixar film Coco.

Carolina Santamaría Delgado (PhD University of Pittsburgh, 2006) is associate professor of musicology and ethnomusicology at Universidad de Antioquia, in Medellín Colombia. Her research deals with popular music consumption and identity in Latin America, and historical research on the production and circulation of tango, bolero, and vallenato through the record industry and the media in Colombia. Co-author of the prize-winner book Travesías por la tierra del olvido, a transdisciplinary study on Colombian vallenato popstar Carlos Vives. Her interest in decolonial theory and the proximity to thinkers of the Modernity/Coloniality group has informed her involvement with the curricular design of postgraduate programs in music in Bogotá and Medellín.

Amanda C. Soto is assistant professor of music education at Texas State University, where she teaches undergraduate and graduate music education courses and is the student teacher coordinator. She co-teaches the Smithsonian Folkways Certification Course in World Music Pedagogy in Seattle, WA. She earned a BA degree in Music Education from the University of North Texas and received a MA in Ethnomusicology and a PhD in Music Education from the University of Washington. Her research interest include world music pedagogy, children’s musical culture and identity, social justice in music education, and Mexican and Mexican American’s music, culture, and pedagogy.
Juan Eduardo Wolf is assistant professor of ethnomusicology at the School of Music and Dance of the University of Oregon. He also serves as a core faculty member in the University’s Folklore and Public Culture Program. His book, Styling Blackness in Chile: Music and Dance in the African Diaspora, is in production with Indiana University Press and will be available in 2019. He is currently serving as Chair of the SEM Latin American and Caribbean Section.

Música del Corazón featured artists: David F. García, Gregorio Gonzales, Lone Piñón, Lara Manzanares, Jerome Martínez, and Brenda Romero. Guest appearance by Frank McCulloch. For more information about the event and bios of all performers, visit: http://www.robbtrust.org/timeline/musica-del-corazon-una-velada-nuevomexicana-nhcc-wednesday-november-14-730-pm.

Acknowledgments

Symposium coordinator: Ana R. Alonso Minutti

Panel co-coordinators: León F. García Corona and Juan Eduardo Wolf

Música del Corazón coordinator: Enrique Lamadrid

The 2018 SEM pre-conference symposium is made possible by the support of the UNM John Donald Robb Trust, the UNM Department of Music (Musicology), and the SEM Latin American and Caribbean Section (LACSEM).

Música del Corazón is made possible by the support of the UNM John Donald Robb Trust and the National Hispanic Cultural Center.

Special thanks to Eva Lipton-Ormand (Program Specialist, UNM Robb Trust) and Aubrie Powell (UNM Musicology Graduate Assistant).