

Experience Music Project | Science Fiction Museum and Hall of Fame

Fact Sheet

***American Sabor: Latinos in U.S. Popular Music*—Oct. 13, 2007 through Sept. 7, 2008**

Entire press kit is available at www.empsfm.org/press/sabor

Exhibition: *American Sabor: Latinos in U.S. Popular Music* is a 5,000 square-foot exhibition created by Experience Music Project in partnership with the University of Washington. The exhibition focuses on five centers of Latino popular music in America since World War II: **New York City, Los Angeles, Miami, San Antonio** and **San Francisco**. The bilingual exhibition is guided by an hour-long audio tour. The exhibition has 45 interviews with Latino musicians; 100 artifacts such as costumes and musicians' instruments; interactives including keyboards and a mixing board; and a dance floor where people can move to their favorite rhythms.

Exhibition Highlights:

- ❖ **100 artifacts**, including Ritchie Valens' Harmony electric guitar and the Mexican-style vest he wore on American Bandstand in 1958; a purple mariachi suit designed by Manuel for Linda Ronstandt, a trombone belonging to salsa star Willie Colón; a gown and shoes worn by salsa star Celia Cruz; a pair of congas belonging to Michael Carabello, one of the original percussionists in the Santana band; and much more.
- ❖ A **dance video** to show how integral dance and movement is to Latino music.
- ❖ **Films** with in-depth interpretations to better understand Latino music, rhythms and culture.
- ❖ **Maps** that show the migration of Latino artists and music.
- ❖ **Listening kiosks** that allow visitors to listen to songs in a sound-controlled environment and narration about the significance of key songs.
- ❖ **Interactives**, including a keyboard with keys that light up and show visitors how to play hooks from well-known Latino songs and a mixer that allows visitors to remix Latino songs.
- ❖ An hour-long **audio tour** including stories from artists such as Carlos Santana, Johnny Pacheco, Willie Colón, Michael Carabello and clips related to exhibit displays.

Exhibit Themes:

1. How have the musical innovations of Latino youths crossed ethnic and racial boundaries and helped shape American Popular Music?
2. How have immigration and migration shaped Latino and U.S. Popular Music?
3. In what ways have Latinos musically expressed their experiences as Americans?

Location: Experience Music Project
Science Fiction Museum and Hall of Fame
at Seattle Center
325 5th Avenue North
Seattle, WA 98109

Curatorial team: Curator: Jasen Emmons, EMP Director of Curatorial Affairs

Guest curators: Marisol Berríos-Miranda, Shannon Dudley and Michelle Habell-Pallán

Grand Opening: Saturday, Oct. 13, 2007

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Grand Opening

Week Highlights:

Wednesday, Oct. 10, 2007 at 10 a.m.—Media preview
Friday, Oct. 12, 2007—Members' opening

Hours:

Open seven days a week, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. (winter, begin after Labor Day)
Open seven days a week, 10 a.m.-7 p.m. (summer, begin Memorial Day weekend)

Admission:

Adults (18-64)	\$15
Seniors (65+)	\$12
Youth (5-17)	\$12
Student or Military (with I.D.)	\$12
Members	FREE
Children under 5	FREE

Latino Music-Inspired Facts:

- ❖ **"Louie, Louie"** performed by The Kingsman, **"Get Off of My Cloud"** written and performed by The Rolling Stones and Shania Twain's **"That Don't Impress Me Much"** were all influenced by the cha cha cha, a Cuban music style made famous in New York in the 1950s. Through different eras and popular music genres, the cha cha cha remains, creating a danceable rhythm and repetitive lyrics that can create an "earworm"—the much sought after trait of pop songs.
- ❖ The introduction to the song "Break on Through," performed by **The Doors** in 1967, was influenced by the mambo. The mambo is a Cuban musical form and dance style. It blends Afro-Cuban rhythms with the swing era big-band format.
- ❖ The word **"mambo"** means conversation with the gods. It was derived from the language of African slaves in the Caribbean.
- ❖ The **Miami Sound Machine's** *Primitive Love* album from 1986, included the tune "Conga!," which became the first single to be simultaneously included on Billboard's pop, Latin, soul and dance charts.
- ❖ Many of the Latino rock 'n' roll bands and artists from the 1960s created perplexing monikers, perhaps to conceal their ethnicities and fit into the rock 'n' roll mold. Take for instance, **? and the Mysterians, Cannibal and the Headhunters, Sir Douglas Quintet** and **Sam the Sham and the Pharaohs**.
- ❖ **? and the Mysterians**, popular for their hit "96 Tears," is a band comprised of Mexican Americans. They are often referred to as the first punk band.
- ❖ German immigrants in Texas introduced musicians in Northern Mexico to the **accordion and polka**, which are integrated into Latino music today. A **conjunto** is a type of accordion-based folk music that combines German and Czech polka bands with Mexican dances for working-class social dances.
- ❖ The first Mexican American rock star **Richie Valens'** given name was Richard Valenzuela. He shortened his surname in order to sound less Mexican and avoid discrimination. Like many Mexican Americans of his generation, he did not speak Spanish and learned phonetically the lyrics of "La Bamba."

Experience **Music** Project | **Science Fiction Museum** and Hall of Fame

- ❖ **Robert Lopez**, a Mexican American better known today as El Vez—the “Mexican Elvis,” was once a member of The Zeros, a punk band based in California.
- ❖ **Los Lobos**, perhaps best-known for their hit cover of “La Bamba,” started out playing rock ‘n’ roll, but then spent eight years learning to play Mexican instruments and songs before blending their myriad musical influences. They are now considered one of the most original and successful Mexican American bands.
- ❖ **Low riders** started as a trend that stemmed from a Chicano take on the U.S. fascination with cars. Chicanos favored Chevrolets because the brand was a symbol of Americana. Other ethnicities picked up on this and low riders became a popular trend, influencing artists such as War, who wrote and recorded the hit, “**Low Rider**.”
- ❖ In 1970s, California artists began incorporating Mexican melodies and rhythms, including the **Eagles** who started out at **Linda Ronstadt**’s backup band.
- ❖ **Joan Baez** went to high school in California and experienced racism as the only Latina in her school. Years later she sang “We Shall Overcome” at farm worker rallies to support the work of Caesar Chavez.
- ❖ **Carlos Santana** started his musical career by playing the violin. He was influenced by his father, José, a violinist in a Mariachi band.

Glossary:

- ❖ **American** - Of the Americas.
- ❖ **Banda rap** - Popular music rooted in Southern California. The genre is popular among more recent immigrants to the U.S. It fuses hip-hop with a brass instrument style used in Mexican *banda*.
- ❖ **Break dancing** - A street dance style that evolved as part of the hip-hop movement in the South Bronx during the early 1970s.
- ❖ **Boogaloo** - A Latin music genre that combines cha cha cha with rhythm and blues, soul and rock ‘n’ roll. It was the first Latino genre to incorporate English lyrics.
- ❖ **Cha cha cha** - A fast rhythmic ballroom dance of Latin American origin with a basic pattern of three steps and a shuffle.
- ❖ **Chicano groove** - Chicano is another word for Mexican American. Chicano groove is an emerging genre of popular music that is bilingual and bicultural.
- ❖ **Claves** - A percussion instrument consisting of a pair of short, thick dowels that are struck together to create a noise.
- ❖ **Conjunto** - Accordion-based folk music that combines German and Czech polka bands with Mexican dances for working-class social dances.
- ❖ **Corrido** - A Mexican narrative song or ballad with a rhythm similar to a European waltz.
- ❖ **Latino** - A native or inhabitant of Latin America or a person of Latin American origin living in the U.S.

Experience **Music** Project | **Science Fiction Museum** and Hall of Fame

- ❖ **Mambo** - A Cuban musical form and dance style. It blends Afro-Cuban rhythms with the swing era big-band format.
- ❖ **Pachucos and pachucas** - A nickname for Mexican American youth from the 1940s who dressed in a style similar to those who wore zoot suits.
- ❖ **Reggaetón** - A form of urban music that became popular in the early 1990s that blends Jamaican music and hip-hop. It was formed when Puerto Rican and Panamanian youths began rapping in Spanish over Jamaican dancehall rhythms.
- ❖ **Rumba** – A music and dance style that originated in Africa and migrated to Cuba and ultimately the U.S.
- ❖ **Sabor** - Spanish word for taste or flavor, commonly used to describe good music.
- ❖ **Salsa** - A Spanish Caribbean genre that combines cha cha cha with the mambo.

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