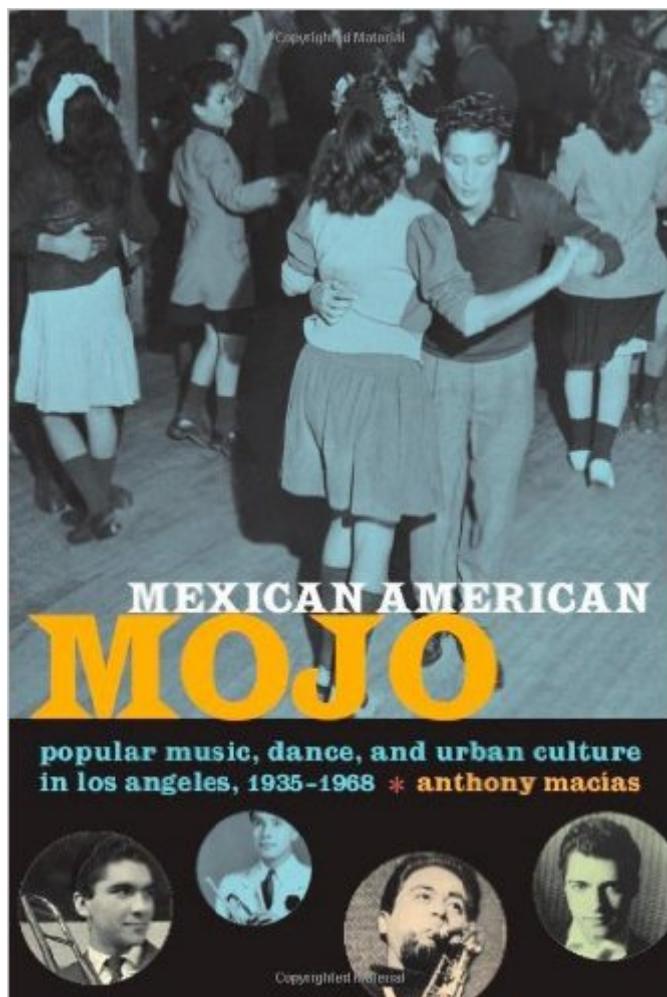


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# **Mexican American Mojo: Popular Music, Dance, And Urban Culture In Los Angeles, 1935â€“1968 (Refiguring American Music)**



## Synopsis

Stretching from the years during the Second World War when young couples jitterbugged across the dance floor at the Zenda Ballroom, through the early 1950s when honking tenor saxophones could be heard at the Angelus Hall, to the Spanish-language cosmopolitanism of the late 1950s and 1960s, Mexican American Mojo is a lively account of Mexican American urban culture in wartime and postwar Los Angeles as seen through the evolution of dance styles, nightlife, and, above all, popular music. Revealing the links between a vibrant Chicano music culture and postwar social and geographic mobility, Anthony Macias shows how by participating in jazz, the zoot suit phenomenon, car culture, rhythm and blues, rock and roll, and Latin music, Mexican Americans not only rejected second-class citizenship and demeaning stereotypes, but also transformed Los Angeles. Macias conducted numerous interviews for Mexican American Mojo, and the voices of little-known artists and fans fill its pages. In addition, more famous musicians such as Ritchie Valens and Lalo Guerrero are considered anew in relation to their contemporaries and the city. Macias examines language, fashion, and subcultures to trace the history of hip and cool in Los Angeles as well as the Chicano influence on urban culture. He argues that a grass-roots multicultural urban civility that challenged the attempted containment of Mexican Americans and African Americans emerged in the neighborhoods, schools, nightclubs, dance halls, and auditoriums of mid-twentieth-century Los Angeles. So take a little trip with Macias, via streetcar or freeway, to a time when Los Angeles had advanced public high school music programs, segregated musicians' union locals, a highbrow municipal Bureau of Music, independent R & B labels, and robust rock and roll and Latin music scenes.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

**Mexican American Mojo: Popular Music, Dance and Urban Culture in Los Angeles, 1935 - 1968** By Anthony Macias

Anthony Macias' Mexican American Mojo is a highly readable, informative, and neatly-crafted examination of the indispensable roles played by various Mexican Americans in the middle of the 20th century in Los Angeles in the popular musical culture of the time. Macias self-consciously moves beyond mere presentation of the well-known figures of Mexican Angelino music (193), such as Ritchie Valens (184 - 191), and presents us with a variety of sketches of names, faces, styles, and relationships which flourished in the cosmopolitan atmosphere of the period. Not strictly limiting himself to a discussion of musical style and musical figures, Macias evokes full-bodied portraits of Mexican American cultural groups: squares and pachucos, immigrants and high-school kids, jazz legends and G.I.'s. In particular, Macias' (Chapter 2) examination of the role of fashion as assimilation and resistance opens the book artfully and reveals both the strengths and weaknesses of his approach. While he does not address the role of formal fashion, driven by European and East-coast interests, he is constantly mindful of the larger historical context in which Mexican American fashion in music and clothes develops. His work constantly references the popular African American styles, such as those which formed the foundation of Zoot suit fashion (70 - 71), and the distinct tensions which arise between sub-groups (such as Zoot suiters) and other Mexican Americans.

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