



Narcocorrido: A Journey into the Music of Drugs, Guns, and Guerrillas

Elijah Wald

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In the first full-length exploration of the contemporary and controversial Mexican corrido, award-winning author Elijah Wald blends a travel narrative with his search for the roots of this genre -- a modern outlaw music that fuses the sensibilities of medieval ballads with the edgy grit of gangsta rap.

From international superstars to rural singers documenting their local current events in the regions dominated by guerilla war, Wald visited these songwriters in their homes, exploring the heartland of the Mexican drug traffic and traveling to urban centers such as Los Angeles and Mexico City. The corrido genre is famous for its hard-bitten songs of drug traffickers and gunfights, and also functions as a sort of musical newspaper, singing of government corruption, the lives of immigrants in the United States, and the battles of the Zapatista rebellion in Chiapas. Though largely unknown to English speakers, corridos top the Latin charts and dominate radio playlists both in the United States and points south. Wald provides in-depth looks at the songwriters who have transformed groups like the popular Tigres del Norte into enduring superstars, as well as the younger artists who are carrying the corrido into the twenty-first century. In searching for the poetry and social protest behind the gaudy lyrics of powerful drug lords, Wald shows how popular music can remain the voice of a people, even in this modern world of globalization, electronic media, and gangsters who ship cocaine in 747s.

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