



# Oye Como Va!: Hybridity and Identity in Latino Popular Music

*Deborah Pacini Hernandez*

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Listen Up! When the New York born Tito Puente composed "Oye Como Va!" in the 1960s, his popular song was called "Latin" even though it was a fusion of Afro-Cuban and New York Latino musical influences. A decade later, Carlos Santana, a Mexican immigrant, blended Puente's tune with rock and roll, which brought it to the attention of national audiences. Like Puente and Santana, Latino/a musicians have always blended musics from their homelands with other sounds in our multicultural society, challenging ideas of what "Latin" music is or ought to be. Waves of immigrants further complicate the picture as they continue to bring their distinctive musical styles in to the U.S.--from merengue and bachata to cumbia and reggaeton. In *Oye Como Va!*, Deborah Pacini Hernandez traces the trajectories of various US Latino musical forms in a globalizing world, examining how the blending of Latin music reflects Latino/a American lives connecting across nations. Exploring the simultaneously powerful, vexing, and stimulating relationship between hybridity, music, and identity, *Oye Como Va!* asserts that this potent combination is a signature of the US Latino/a experience.

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