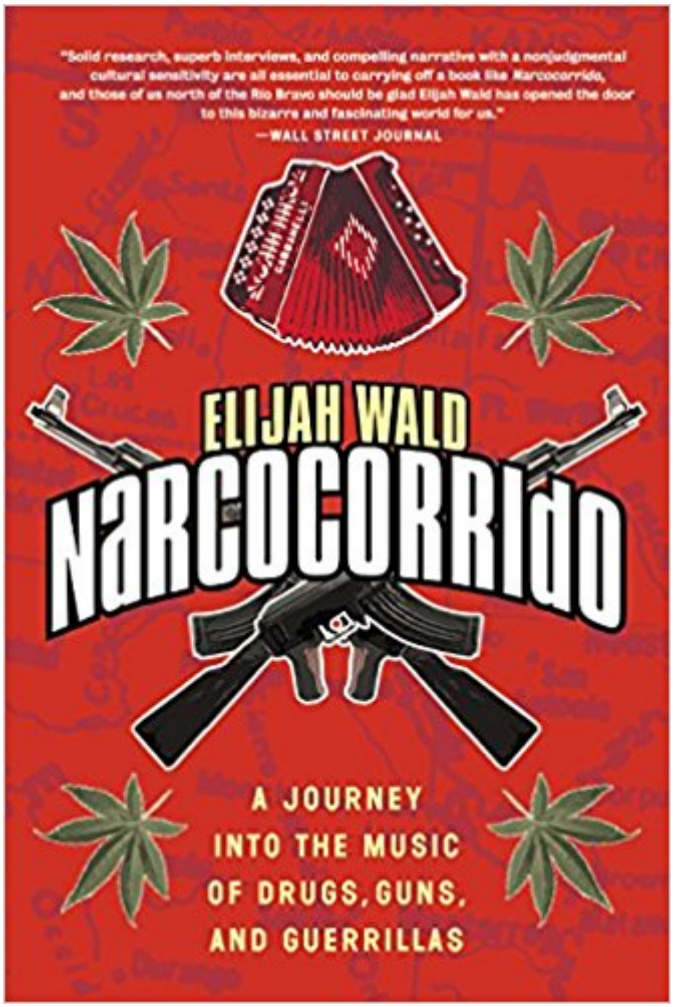
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Narcocorrido: A Journey Into The Music Of Drugs, Guns, And Guerrillas



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Synopsis

No existe tradiciÃƒâ œn mÃƒÂ•s mexicana que la de los corridos, las herÃƒâ œicas baladas que celebran a los de abajo -- a los fugitivos y pistoleros. Al igual que las baladas de Robin Hood o de Jesse James, los corridos han sido para los pobres una manera de enaltecer a sus hÃƒâ roes. Los corridos siguen, pero sus hÃƒâ roes han cambiado: ahora son cÃƒâ lebres los narcotraficantes. Elijah Wald cuenta la fascinante historia de esta nueva versiÃƒâ œn de una vieja tradiciÃƒâ œn: la de los narcocorridos. Traza el desarrollo de los corridos desde sus orÃƒÂ•genes en el indÃƒâ œmito Oeste hasta su mÃƒÂ•s reciente encarnaciÃƒâ œn en la costa del mar PacÃƒÂ•fico, la cuna del trÃƒÂ•fico de drogas mexicano. Sigue su expansiÃƒâ œn hasta Los Angeles, donde los corridos son la voz de la juventud actual de los barrios latinos, y hasta los estados de MichoacÃƒÂ•n y Guerrero, donde canciones sobre narcopistoleros coinciden con baladas sobre los guerrilleros en las montaÃƒâ ˆas. Wald viaja a la Ciudad de MÃƒâ xico para encontrarse con el juglar viajero de la rebeliÃƒâ œn zapatista, y continÃƒÅ¡a hasta Cuernavaca para encontrarse con Teodoro Bello, el genio iletrado que se ha convertido en el compositor de mayor Ãƒâ xito en la historia de MÃƒâ xico. Discursivo, vÃƒÂ•vido y perspicaz, Narcocorridos descubre una tradiciÃƒâ œn musical llena de vitalidad mostrando de manera fascinante el lugar que ocupa el narcotrÃƒÂ•fico en la cultura mexicana.

Book Information

Paperback: 368 pages

Publisher: HarperCollins EspaÃƒÆ’Ã Â ol; Reprint edition (October 22, 2002)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0060505109

ISBN-13: 978-0060505103

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 0.9 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.9 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars 20 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #600,782 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #126 inÃ Â Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Musical Genres > Ethnic & International > Ethnic #920 inÃ Â Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Musical Genres > Popular #1650 inÃ Â Books > Humor & Entertainment > Sheet Music & Scores > Forms & Genres > Popular

Customer Reviews

Guitar in hand, journalist and musician Wald (Josh White: Society Blues) takes a yearlong journey

through Mexico and the southwestern U.S. tracking down composers and performers of the narcocorrido, a modern spinoff of the 19th-century Mexican folk ballad (corrido) that combines the traditional accompaniment of accordion and 12-string guitar (bajo sexto) with markedly current lyrics. Gone are the old "song stories" celebrating heroic generals and lost battles of the Mexican revolution. Narcocorridos romanticize the drug trade the botched smugglings, fallen kingpins and dishonorable police. Wald interviews dozens of key players, from Angel Gonzalez, whose 1972 "Contrabando y Traiciin" ("Smuggling and Betrayal") is credited with launching the narco-trend, to the Rivera family, whose popular Los Angeles record label releases "songs that are notable for their lack of social consciousness, their willingness to push the limits of acceptability and baldly cash in on the most violent and nasty aspects of the drug trade." The style has become hugely popular in L.A. and northwestern Mexico and has spawned a narcoculture marked by cowboy hats, sports suits and gold chains. Unfortunately, Wald's narrow, first-person account reads like a travel journal, blithely moving from subject to subject, ignoring historical context. He glosses over the U.S. and Mexican governments' antidrug military campaigns, which disrupted the lives of many innocent civilians. Wald may think the history of U.S.-Mexican drug trafficking has been sufficiently recounted elsewhere, but explaining the narcocorrido without this background is like writing a history of the American protest song without discussing Vietnam. B&w photos not seen by PW. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Wald (Josh White: Society Blues) hitchhiked across Mexico in search of the modern corrido, a popular musical genre that reports the heroics of its subjects against the backdrop of norte?o-like harmonies in guitar and accordion. His book focuses especially on the narcocorrido, a genre of ballad that glorifies gun-toting drug lords in a Mexican version of gangsta rap with accordions. In this personalized account, the author interviews corrido songwriters Angel Gonz lez and Paulino Vargas, who scored hits with Los Tigres del Norte, the most popular group of the genre. He takes his readers to Culiacan, the heart of the Mexican drug business, where archetypal corridista Chalino S nchez immortalized drug traffickers and their exploits before his own assassination. Wald moves next to Los Angeles, where the Chalino-influenced Riveras reign as the first family of the narcocorrido. In the last part of the book, he locates the more politically minded corridistas Enrique Franco and Jesse Armenta, travels to the Rio Bravo and the Texas border for Old West-style corridos, and takes a bus to Mexico City and the mountains of southern Mexico, where little-known corridistas sing paeans to Zapatista guerrillas. Wald ends with a visit to Michoacan, the southern

Mexican drug capital, where he meets corrido legend Teodoro Bello. Half enthusiast and half ethnomusicologist, Wald offers an engaging, fascinating, and well-written account of a much-neglected musical style that will be irresistible to readers of all types. Dave Szatmary, Univ. of Washington, Seattle Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Even though has it in its headline as the "(Spanish Version)," the book is in English. Nonetheless, explore the book by clicking "Look Inside" and make double sure it is in English.Author Elijah Wald takes the reader to the deepest parts of Mexico and South America in "A journey into the music of drugs, guns, and guerrillas. In gathering research for his book titled "Narcocorrido," (Drug traffickers' ballads) the author places his life on the line. He could have been mistaken for a DEA agent and killed.However, Elijah Wald "is a writer and musician with twenty years' experience covering roots and world music. He was writer and consultant on the Smithsonian multimedia project 'The Mississippi: River of song' and is the author of the award-winning biography 'Josh White: Society Blues.'"In his book, "Narcocorrido" the author takes the reader with him in an unforgettable journey to the interviews he made of composers and singers of famous, sometimes political and dangerous narco corridors and their composers and singers. He interviews such composers as Angel Gonzalez, "The Father Camelia," Paulino Vargas, "El Maestro," Teodoro Bello, Mario Quintero, Francisco Quintero, The Rivera Family, Enrique Franco, Jesse Amenta, Juan Garza and many others. The author goes in search of the roots, history, and the reasons some narco corridor singers are savagely murdered. He takes the reader in a dangerous tour to many towns and cities in Mexico and South America. He gambles his life and takes the reader from Tijuana, Baja California to as far as Chiapas, South America.Thus, author, Elijah 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."The experience the reader gets from reading "Narcocorrido," is one that he or she will never forget.

I got interested in this book after looking at some NarcoCorrido album covers my friend owns and wondered what was the obsession with AR-15's and wearing bullet belts crossed around the chest. It's a decent book written from a "Gringo's" perspective. While it's a good read and very informative, I found that alot of the interviews he did with musicians, many were very tight-lipped and offered very vague answers or simply gave the author the run-around, and this occurrs over and over again throughout the book. I understand that these musicians probably fear for their lives and don't want

to anger the hand that feeds them, or maybe they simply don’t trust a foreigner prying into their lives, but it doesn’t lend to good story-telling when every interview is a series of ambiguious dialogue.

I grew up in the 50’s in Los Angeles, California and I heard norteÃƒÂ o, Tex-Mex, corridos as part of the background (musical wallpaper for me)of being Mexican-American. I say musical wallpaper because it smacked of country, of the recently immigrated. I prefered instead R&B. Later, I preferred anything (ragas, jazz, American folk, soul, tropical) other than the music that Elijah Wald writes about. After visiting Mexico several times as an adult and hearing rancheras and pop and cumbia, the feeling for the music of Mexico began to grow. After reading Mr. Wald’s book I realized that I had ignored a genre of music that had, in fact, been a part of my life from the beginning. Read this book and then buy the music. If you are learning Spanish as a second language, you can generally find the lyrics on-line. There is no better way (short of taking a Mexican lover) to learn and love this beautiful language. The book is well-written, well-reasearched, and will open your musical mind.

While traveling Tucson I fell in love with the Narco Ballads. You really don’t find this type of music where I am in the Midwest. I was interested in the story behind the music and this book really takes you on a journey into the world of the Narcocorrido. It is an amusing and intelligent read.

Elijah Wald is the best living writer on popular, folk, blues, roots, rock, and as it turns out, corrido. He will spoil you for all the goozie fan rags and half-informed I-Was-There books. Narcocorrido isn’t his greatest work, but it’s still far above almost anything else on the market. Long may you run, Eli.

Well, all I can say is the author has an exhaustive knowledge of both music and the latter day drug trafficking problems in Mexico. It’s a hard book to read if you love the Mexican people as I do - much respect for the salt of the earth that most Mexicans are....heck, I even respect "El Chapo" and the corrupt but nonviolent government officials that receive "plobo o plata" threats from the cartels. They’re all doing what they were taught to do....it’s the kids caught up in the gangs with little education and no jobs I feel sorry for. As in the song "Smugglers Blues" by Glenn frey, "It’s the lure of easy money, one you can’t refuse...".How can we help these people and ourselves out of this nightmare? IMHO we must end the "war on drugs" and let the doctors dispense medication to the addicts - no profit = no gangs = no killing each other by the dozens = less blood feuding and resentment = a whole people living more secure, safer lives = a world where we can share our lives

internationally without fearing terrorism.Equitable distribution of resources will help as will better education and opportunity. Welcoming workers to cross the borders, traveling to foreign countries so we lose our prejudices.....It won't be that hard hope.This book also gave me an appreciation for the narcocorridos and the country music of Mexico....Thank you for writing this book - recommended highly.

That's a great book

Haven't finished this yet. Set it aside to read The Connection which I have been promising myself for years that I would read. But this starts quite well and is informative about a subject that I don't think has been covered by another writer in English before. Opens as if it will be a 3, maybe a 4 star rating.

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