

# San Antonio's West Side Sound

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The Texas Tornados, courtesy of Reprise Records. Photo: Will Van Overbeek

*It is a rare privilege indeed when a scholar has the opportunity to bring to the public's attention a musical genre that has been largely unstudied in the past.<sup>1</sup> The understanding of our nation's musical heritage is enhanced whenever these less-well-known genres are recognized and examined, especially those that have a rich history steeped in multi-ethnic traditions. San Antonio's West Side Sound is just such a genre, having drawn from a broad array of regional influences to become a truly distinct musical style. Outside of South-Central Texas, however, the West Side Sound is a largely unknown phenomenon. Even within San Antonio itself, there are many who would have difficulty defining the West Side Sound. The goal of this article is to explain what the West Side Sound is and to examine its origins and development as a unique component of Texas music.*



The West Side Sound is a remarkable amalgamation of different ethnic musical influences found in and around San Antonio in South-Central Texas. It includes blues, conjunto, country, rhythm and blues, polka, swamp pop, rock and roll, and other seemingly disparate styles. All of these have somehow been woven together into a sound that has captured the attention of fans worldwide. In a sense, the very eclectic nature of the West Side Sound reflects the larger musical environment of Texas, in which a number of ethnic communities over the centuries have exchanged musical traditions in a prolific “cross-pollination” of cultures. The result has been the development of a rich and complex regional musical style, of which the West Side Sound has become an integral part.

Some of the musicians who helped develop San Antonio’s West Side Sound in its various forms are well known to both Texans and others across the country and around the world. The style was first brought to national prominence with Sunny Ozuna’s 1963 hit, “Talk to Me.” “She’s About A Mover,” the 1965 Top Twenty hit by the Sir Douglas Quintet soon brought additional recognition to the Alamo City’s music scene.<sup>2</sup> Two musicians who were part of that band, Augie Meyers and the late Doug Sahm, went on to

build nationally and internationally successful careers. Also famous around the world is the ubiquitous Flaco Jiménez, who has five Grammy Awards, and has recorded with such prominent artists as Bob Dylan, the Rolling Stones, and Dwight Yoakam.

Sahm, Meyers, and Jiménez, along with Freddy Fendder, once again brought the West Side Sound to a global audience during the 1990s with their musically eclectic super group, the Texas Tornados.<sup>3</sup> The late Randy Garibay was a less-well-known but also very influential member of the West Side Sound. His contributions to the evolution of the genre have made him somewhat of a legend in San Antonio, and his passing in early 2002 has been difficult for musicians and fans throughout the state.<sup>4</sup>

However, most of the other musicians involved in the development of the West Side Sound are not as well known, but

they all played an important role in shaping this genre, beginning as early as the 1950s. Charlie Alvarado, Armando Almindarez (better known as Mando Cavallero), Frank Rodarte, Sonny Ace, Clifford Scott, and Vernon “Spot” Barnett all contributed to the creation of the West Side Sound in one way or another. Alvarado’s band, Charlie and the Jives, had such regional hits in 1959 as “For the Rest of My Life” and “My Angel of Love.” Cavallero had an influential conjunto group called San Antonio Allegre that played live every Sunday morning on Radio KIWW.<sup>5</sup>

Almindarez formed several groups, including the popular rock and roll band Mando and the Chili Peppers. Rodarte led a group called the Del Kings, which formed in San Antonio during the late 1950s, and brought the West Side Sound to Las Vegas as the house band for the Sahara Club, where they remained for nearly ten years.<sup>6</sup> Sonny Ace had a number of different groups during this period, including Sonny and the Rhythm Rockers, Sonny and the Montclairs, and Sonny Ace and the Twisters. Regional hits included covers of the Louis Prima songs “Just a Gigolo” and “Oh, Marie.” Ace’s own compositions included “Take My Love,” “You Tear My Dreams



Flaco Jiménez with multiple Grammy Awards.



Apart,” and “Darling of Mine.”<sup>7</sup>

Clifford Scott is best known for his song “Honky Tonk,” from which the unique saxophone solo became a model for San Antonio sax players for years.<sup>8</sup> Scott and Spot Barnett also served as mentors for many younger Mexican-American saxophone players, including Charlie Alvarado, Rocky Morales, and Frank Rodarte. Scott and Barnett certainly were a source of inspiration for Doug Sahn and Augie Meyers. Barnett’s band, The Spot Barnett Combo, was the house band at San Antonio’s legendary Ebony Club, and he also played regularly at the famous Eastwood Country Club. Barnett’s first recording, “The Ebony Shuffle,” became a regional hit. Later, Barnett had a combo called the Twentieth Century Orchestra, in which a fifteen-year-old Doug Sahn sat in when members of the group were unable to make a gig.

In its present form, the West Side Sound is a multifaceted musical entity. At its core are the influences of rock and roll, blues, country, conjunto, swamp pop, and rhythm and blues (also known as R&B). To that end, a key component is the role of the horn section and its relationship to the guitar. Texas music historian Alan Govenar has noted that Texas musicians Eddie Durham and Charlie Christian pioneered this interplay between horns and guitars in the state’s jazz scene. Both established the guitar “as a rhythm instrument to underlie the voice and horn sections.” According to Govenar, another Texan, T-Bone Walker, was responsible for furthering the role of the electric guitar, a role that would “supersede” the saxophone as a premier solo instrument. In so doing, Walker transformed the relationship between the horns and the guitar as the “rhythm and blues band sound became tighter and depended more on the interplay of the electric guitar with the horn section, piano, and drums.”<sup>9</sup>

This orchestration is a key element in the West Side Sound. Perhaps more than any other San Antonio musician, Randy Garibay contributed to the voicing of the guitar as a rhythm

and solo instrument for the West Side Sound during the last decade. Garibay’s signature song, “Barbacoa Blues,” is exemplary of that interplay between guitar and horns. The guitar never completely replaces the horns, however. According to Spot Barnett, the contribution of the horns in San Antonio’s West Side Sound is the voicing. Barnett says that, “From the musician’s point of view, we have a voicing. The trumpet player basically took the lead note in the chord, and depending on

how much power, whether we wanted the chords to lean high or lean low, is whether we put the tenor on the third.” Barnett further elaborates on the role of intervals. “All right, say for instance we wanted to have a big, round full C chord. Okay, on the bottom, we would put [an] E, and a Bb...Then, on the top of the chord, we would put D, G, and C on top. Now, that’s our sound there.”<sup>10</sup>

Over the years, the West Side Sound absorbed Mexican-American, African-American, and Anglo-American influences, such as conjunto, blues, R&B, country, swamp pop, and rock and roll. This happened largely through the contributions of Doug Sahn, Augie Meyers, Flaco Jiménez, Sonny Ozuna, and Randy Garibay. Jiménez, Ozuna,

and Meyers often included polkas and boleros in their musical repertoires.<sup>11</sup> Sahn and Meyers, close friends since they were 11 or 12 years old, were influenced by black music, but they also were big fans of Hank Williams, Lefty Frizzell, Jimmie Rodgers, and other country artists.<sup>12</sup> Sahn and Meyers would more fully express these country influences after they became involved in Austin’s “Progressive Country” music scene of the 1970s.<sup>13</sup>

Because of their diverse influences, the West Side Sound musicians developed an eclectic genre that cut across ethnic and racial boundaries to include a broad range of styles. In addition to borrowing from a variety of ethnic genres, many of these bands were themselves racially and ethnically integrated. As previously noted, the African-American musician, Spot Barnett, and his Twentieth Century Orchestra often included a



Randy Garibay, promo for *Barbacoa Blues*.

young, white Doug Sahn. Charlie Alvarado's band, Charlie and the Jives, has been called the "United Nations Band," because it featured musicians from several ethnic backgrounds. As Alvarado says, "I had James Kelley, Irish, and I had Pineapple, Hawaiian mix, and I had Jitterbug Web, black. I had Benny Easley, black, and myself, Chicano. They said 'You got a United Nations band there.'"<sup>14</sup>

What is particularly intriguing about the multi-ethnic origins of the West Side Sound is that this music is rooted in the 1950s, at a time when much of the rest of the Deep South was undergoing violent upheaval in the struggle over civil rights and racial equality. For a better understanding of how these musicians overcame contemporary social barriers and cultural differences to create this unique musical form, it may be helpful to look briefly at some case studies involving inter-ethnic human relationships.

Elisabeth Gareis's case study of five German exchange students in the United States suggests that there are six key factors contributing to successful inter-ethnic relationships: culture, personality, homophily, an adjustment state,

Chicano Rodarte, as well as the Anglos Doug Sahn and Augie Meyers, were nurtured in a multi-ethnic environment. For example, as little boys, Sahn and Meyers listened to African-American bands at San Antonio's Eastwood Country Club. This was possible, because the club's owner, Johnny Phillips, was a friend who shopped at the Meyer's family store, and he allowed the youngsters to hang around the club and watch the musicians.

Another factor in this willingness to exchange musical influences may be related to what some researchers have called "elusive culture." Elusive culture has to do with how young people define their own sense of identity, in part, by borrowing, or choosing not to borrow, from surrounding cultural influences. In a study of adolescent adjustment carried out in a Toronto, Canada, high school, Daniel A. Yon argues that "Elusive culture...gestures towards a view of culture as on-going processes...implicated in the ambivalence and contradictions of social life and cultural practices rather than serving as a counter force to them." According to the idea of "elusive culture," young people have difficulty identifying themselves within a particular group. They can overcome this, however "when the desire to

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## Morales and other Mexican-American musicians, as well as Anglos, admired Barnett and Clifford Scott during this early formative period.

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communicative competence, and proximity. Of these six, homophily and proximity are most relevant to our discussion. Homophily, defined as similarity between friends, certainly was an important factor in how West Side Sound musicians from different ethnic groups developed a love and respect for each other and for a broad range of ethnic musical genres.<sup>15</sup>

Rocky Morales, an original member of the premier West Side Sound band, the West Side Horns, and a long-time sax player for Doug Sahn, commented on the level of admiration and affection he and others had for fellow African-American band leader Spot Barnett. "He was the greatest influence for everybody at that time [in the 1950s]."<sup>16</sup> Morales and other Mexican-American musicians, as well as Anglos, admired Barnett and Clifford Scott during this early formative period. Garibay, Meyers, Sahn, Rodarte, Barnett, and others all shared a passion for what they called "soul music." When Frank Rodarte was asked how it was that Chicanos can play the blues, he replied, "The good Lord has control over that. He knows how he distributes his talent. He gives it to whites, to blacks, to everybody, he gives it soul."<sup>17</sup>

Proximity is also important in understanding how these musicians got along so well musically. Sahn, Rodarte, and Meyers all grew up on the East Side of San Antonio. That neighborhood was predominantly African-American, so the

'know' cultures is made rigid."<sup>18</sup> In order to do this, young people must be able to explore their personal identities in relation to the identities and cultures of others.

A number of examples of this inter-cultural quest to formulate their own individual identities can be seen among the young musicians of the West Side Sound. Charlie Alvarado, founder of Charlie and the Jives, formed his sense of self-awareness playing in orchestras as a teenager in the multi-cultural setting of San Antonio.<sup>19</sup> Meyers and Sahn developed much of their musical identity listening to various acts that played the Eastwood Club, the Ebony Club, and other venues. Perhaps most revealing are the observations on this subject by West Side Sound Chicano pioneer and bassist extraordinaire Jack Barber:

There are some Chicanos that are raised in San Antonio, and they just stay San Antonio. They stay Mexican, or Chicano, or whatever you want to call it. They stay that way. There are a lot of black people that just stay black on the east side, you know, they don't play anything more progressive than what they're doing...I think it's a chosen few that want to know more.<sup>20</sup>

Thus, the conditions were in place to make this "elusive culture" more attainable for these young San Antonio

musicians. As Jack Barber suggests, there also existed an internal desire on the part of the musicians to go beyond their own culture to explore others.

Intercultural studies researcher Shi-Xu does not agree with the “mainstream pedagogy of intercultural contact and communication,” because it allows for “power saturation of intercultural encounters, where power is defined as textual practice of domination, exclusion, or prejudice.”<sup>21</sup> Texas music historian Manuel Peña might agree with this assessment, since he argues that a “dialectic of conflict” has existed between social classes and ethnic groups in Texas for over a century and a half.<sup>22</sup> These assessments are marginally applicable to the situation at hand, however. Only two of the musicians, Joe Hernandez in the 1970s and Randy Garibay in the 1990s, were actively political. With regards to the assertions of Shi-Xu, the majority of the musicians of the West Side Sound decided to put aside their cultural differences at a very young age.<sup>23</sup>

Another important factor in the ability of the West Side Sound musicians to blend together such a diverse array of ethnic musical traditions is the unique racial and cultural

Antonio as “‘heaven on earth’ when compared to other southern cities.”<sup>26</sup>

There were several factors that contributed to this “moderate racial climate” in San Antonio during the 1950s and 1960s: the relatively small size of the black community (7% of the overall population); minimal contact between whites and blacks, since African Americans were relegated primarily to the east side of the city; the existence of a large Mexican-American population (approximately 40% of the overall population), which helped to obscure color lines in the city; the existence of several large desegregated military bases in and around San Antonio; and the leading role played by certain religious leaders, who worked to chip “away at the community consensus and prepare the ground for racial peace and cooperation.”<sup>27</sup> In regard to the last point, it should be noted that, while most Texas communities resisted the Supreme Court’s 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education* ruling to desegregate all public schools, many of San Antonio’s public school districts had integrated by the fall of 1955, far more quickly than most other southern cities.<sup>28</sup>

As can be seen both in the intercultural studies and historical

## 30 Harry Burns, a leader of the local branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), characterized San Antonio as “‘heaven on earth’ when compared to other southern cities.

environment of San Antonio. Because of the unusual ethno-cultural situation of San Antonio as experienced by these young musicians, Peña’s thesis also can be challenged. When asked if Anglos or Chicanos had the right to play the blues, African-American Spot Barnett responded by saying “music is music. You take the same notes to play the same everything...we might write in prejudices, and add in prejudices, but that’s not how God gave it out. He gave us twelve different sounds and let us figure it out scientifically; how to, you know, how to look at it. See, God puts the puzzle there, and then he leaves it to us to figure out.”<sup>24</sup>

All of the musicians interviewed for this article stated that bigotry was not a major factor in their lives in San Antonio during the 1950s. Indeed segregation did exist *de facto* in the city, but, according to Spot Barnett, the police often looked the other way when individual African Americans challenged segregationist customs.<sup>25</sup> Historian Robert A. Goldberg asserts that “Segregation was woven into the fabric of San Antonio life, but it did not elicit violence or impassioned defenses.” Goldberg further asserts that, “Blacks in San Antonio opposed racial segregation and inequality, but the moderate racial climate tempered their opposition.” Harry Burns, a leader of the local branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), characterized San

development of San Antonio during the 1950s, the city’s young people probably had more opportunities than their contemporaries elsewhere in the South to interact across racial and ethnic boundaries. Because of this relative freedom to explore other cultures in a more moderate racial climate, these young San Antonio musicians developed a unique, multi-ethnic musical genre, the West Side Sound, which reflected the poly-cultural environment of the city.

In addition to a “moderate racial climate,” which allowed local residents to interact more freely, there were numerous venues and outlets around the city through which different types of music could be shared. There were dozens of San Antonio radio stations by the 1950s. The city’s leading station, WOAI, went on the air in 1922. Founded by G.A.C. Holff, the station upgraded from 500 to 5,000 watts in 1925, and, in 1928, the station joined the first national radio network, NBC. In 1934, the state’s four largest stations, WBAP in Fort Worth, WFAA in Dallas, KPRC in Houston, and WOAI, merged under the supervision of the new Texas Quality Group Network.<sup>29</sup>

Perhaps the most popular musical genre in San Antonio during the 1950s and 1960s was country music. San Antonio had a number of country radio stations to listen to, including some that transmitted from outside of the state. Country music lovers had access to a number of T.V. and radio programs in San



Antonio. KONO 860 AM had a daily show called the "Cowboy Jamboree" that could be heard from 8 to 11 P.M., in addition to a "Western Swing" program that aired each day at 12:30 P.M. KMAC 630 featured the daily program, "Hillbilly Hit Parade." San Antonio's own Adolph Hofner and his honky tonk swing band could be heard Fridays on KTSA 550 at 12:30 P.M. WOAI-TV Channel 4 carried Saturday night broadcasts of "Red River Dave's Barn Dance" and featured local musicians, such as Charley Tompkins, who was billed as the "First King of Cowboys."<sup>30</sup>

One of San Antonio's best-loved programs, the "Louisiana Hayride," was broadcast from outside of the state. It aired on KWKH, a 50,000 watt "hillbilly" station in Shreveport, Louisiana, that broadcast as far west as New Mexico. The Hayride featured top country acts, such as Webb Pierce, Faron Young, Kitty Wells, Slim Whitman, Jim Reeves, George Jones, Johnny Cash, and a young Elvis Presley.<sup>31</sup>

The summer of 1955 was a special time for country music fans in the Alamo City. One of the most publicized events was a visit by Roy Rogers and his horse, Trigger, to San Antonio's Freeman Coliseum. Rogers's arrival on June 18th was scheduled to be broadcast nationally on NBC. *The San Antonio Light* and other newspapers promoted the event, which was to include several appearances by the beloved star of radio and movies.<sup>32</sup> When Rogers did arrive, the *Light* reported that "Roy sang, danced, told stories, performed eight magnificently trained palominos and shook hands with the small fry."<sup>33</sup> Also, in 1955, to mark Disney's release of the film "Davy Crockett," San Antonio sponsored its first "Davy Crockett Week" beginning on August 17th. Celebrations included square dances in downtown streets, a "b'ar grinnin'" contest, which awarded a prize to the kid with the best grin, and a frontier costume award contest.<sup>34</sup>

The large Mexican-American population of San Antonio also had a number of T.V. and radio stations that broadcast different forms of Latin music. In 1955, the Spanish-language station KCOR-TV 41 debuted.<sup>35</sup> This first Latin-owned station in the United States featured numerous programs hosted by Jorge Sareli and other popular local figures. These shows sometimes served as incubators for promoting young Texas musicians. Such was the case in 1956, when Jorge Sareli featured a weekly conjunto band called Las Caminantes, whose accordionist was

**THE BIGGEST SHOW of '53**  
 ALL IN PERSON FALL EDITION  
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 Admission \$2.75, \$3.75, \$4.50  
 A Laroy-Julley Attraction

1953 Advertisement for Nat King Cole, courtesy of the *San Antonio Register*.

a young Flaco Jiménez.<sup>36</sup> San Antonio Allegre, led by Armando Almendarez, was another conjunto group that performed Sundays on KIWW radio and played at local venues, such as the Fiesta Club on Pleasanton.<sup>37</sup>

Mexican-American touring acts also frequented the city. Okie Jones y su Famosa Conjunto, who were quite popular in the Spanish-language music circuit, came to San Antonio in September 1955 to play at the Municipal Auditorium located downtown at what once was Auditorium Circle.<sup>38</sup> Artists also came from Mexico and Hollywood to promote their films. After MGM released *Sombrero* in 1953, starring a very young Ricardo Montalban, the actor appeared for the film's premiere in San Antonio at the Aztec Theatre on the corner of St. Mary's and Commerce.<sup>39</sup> The Alameda Theatre featured Spanish-language films, and famous Mexican artists, such as Antonio Badu, headlined

shows that included other performers from Mexico.<sup>40</sup> Several mariachi bands from Mexico and elsewhere also toured through San Antonio. An ad from the newspaper *La Prensa* in February, 1956 promoted a group called Los Michoacanos as one of the great attractions of Fiesta week and informed readers that the band would appear for seven days at the National Theater.<sup>41</sup>

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**3-STAR ATTRACTION**  
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**B. B. KING**  
 The Blues Boy, composer of  
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**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8, 9 P. M.**  
 Tickets - Pre-sale \$1.50  
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1952 Advertisement for B. B. King, courtesy of the *San Antonio Register*.

One of the remarkable things about San Antonio during the 1950s is that one of the city's smallest ethnic groups, African Americans, seemed to have a disproportionately strong influence on the local music scene. Jazz and R&B were especially prevalent. In 1944, Don Albert opened the original Keyhole Club at the intersection of Iowa and Pine. Albert, a great jazz musician in his own right, was one of the first local club owners to allow integrated audiences. He brought a number of jazz giants, such as Louis Jordan, Nat "King" Cole, Louis Armstrong, Dizzy Gillespie, and the Ink Spots, to his establishment for the enjoyment of Anglo, Hispanic, and African-American customers.<sup>42</sup>

During the 1940s and 1950s, these great jazz players, along with many prominent R&B artists, appeared at the Seven Oaks Country Club on Austin Highway, at the Library Auditorium at 210 West Market, and at the Municipal Auditorium.<sup>43</sup> The Ebony Club on Nebraska Street (now Martin Luther King, Jr., Boulevard) hosted some of the most popular African-American touring acts of the day and, as previously mentioned, featured

City's love affair with rock music started about 15 seconds after the genre had a name.<sup>45</sup> This may be a bit of an overstatement, but several early West Side Sound musicians did quickly embrace rock and roll and began reforming their bands to accommodate the new rock and roll market. Armando Armandarez broke ranks with San Antonio Allegre in 1956 and formed Mando and the Chili Peppers. In 1958, Charlie Alvarado started Charlie and the Jives. Denny Esmond soon formed a group called The Goldenes, which featured Augie Meyers. Sahm had a band called Doug Sahm and the Markays that recorded regional hits, such as "Crazy, Crazy Daisy" and "Two Hearts in Love."<sup>46</sup> In 1959, Frank Rodarte became the bandleader of the Del Kings and later moved the group to Las Vegas. Even Flaco Jiménez began to mix rock and roll into his polka repertoire.

These artists and others played at such clubs as the Fiesta on Commerce Street, the Cabaret on Houston Street, and the Las Vegas on Dolarosa Street. Although Mexican Americans made up the majority of these night clubs' clientele, all of these

**In the end, it was this hybridization of Chicano, Black, and Anglo influences coming from a variety of musical and cultural traditions that blended with rock and roll and gave birth to the West Side Sound by the late 1950s.**

Spot Barnett's Twentieth Century Orchestra as its house band by the middle of the 1950s.

As important as these different venues were, the club that served as the main seedbed for the emerging West Side Sound was the Eastwood Country Club, far out on Nebraska Street in the town of St. Hedwig. As Texas music historian Karla Peterson points out, "The club, owned by Johnnie Phillips, was instrumental in helping young up-and-comers to practice their music, as well as giving well-known black performers a place to play." Here locally influential musicians, such as Barnett, a regular, and Clifford Scott, who sat in when Lionel Hampton's Orchestra was on vacation, mingled freely. Sometimes, Phillips called on Doug Sahm, Rocky Morales, Frank Rodarte, and Randy Garibay to back up Bobby Bland, Bo Diddley, and other touring acts that played the Eastwood. This gave these younger artists a chance to work with nationally prominent acts and to further synthesize their eclectic musical influences. The Eastwood Club was thoroughly integrated from its inception in 1954. Phillips once pointed out that "The Eastwood was one of the few places where people, no matter what color they were, were always welcome."<sup>44</sup>

The final factor that solidified the early West Side Sound was the emergence of rock and roll in the mid-1950s. *San Antonio Express News* columnist Jim Beal, Jr., wrote that, "The Alamo

venues were integrated by the late 1950s. Many of these musicians also played in the officer's clubs and NCO clubs on the desegregated military bases around the city.<sup>47</sup> While these young artists continued to mature musically, they were conscious of the transformation they were undergoing, as they blended their blues, jazz, country, and conjunto influences with the new genre of rock and roll. One of the elder statesmen of the West Side Sound, Charlie Alvarado, commented on the difference in the musicians' approach to rock and roll as compared to earlier styles:

The big difference was that it was more like a job [before]. It was more like a job to me. I had to have my eyes peeled on the charts to get the right notes and everything. When rock and roll came along, you already knew the instrumentation and the chord progressions. Of course blues is just the first, the fourth, and the fifth depending on what key you are in. And you go from there. Once you know how to play that, then your improvisation comes in. You just stay within the changes. And it was just in a way different way. I was involved with the crowd while I was playing instead of just having my head down in the notes.<sup>48</sup>

In the end, it was this hybridization of Chicano, Black, and Anglo influences coming from a variety of musical and cultural traditions that blended with rock and roll and gave birth to the West Side Sound by the late 1950s.

The West Side Sound exploded onto the national stage during the 1960s. In 1963, Sunny Ozuna's San Antonio group, Sunny and the Sunlows, had a national hit with "Talk to Me," which earned the band an appearance on Dick Clark's *American Bandstand*.<sup>49</sup> In 1964, Sahm and Meyers teamed up to form the Sir Douglas Quintet. Houston producer and promoter, Huey Meaux, suggested they form the band and give it a British-sounding name and appearance as part of an effort to capitalize on the success of the Beatles and other groups who were part of the so-called "British Invasion" of the mid-1960s. A year later, the Sir Douglas Quintet had its first big hit with "She's About A Mover."<sup>50</sup>

"Talk to Me" and "She's About a Mover" are very representative of the West Side Sound of the early 1960s. The former song is a slow R&B number that utilizes horns, which are spaced in intervals of major thirds, much like those used in mariachi, corrido, and bolero styles. In "She's About a Mover," a song that seems to be influenced by Ray Charles, Doug Sahm yells out "Oh yeah, what I say!" at the end of several verses. There is also evidence of a Mexican-American polka styling in the song. The bass drum strikes resoundingly on the first and third beats while the snare follows on the second and fourth. In addition, Augie Meyers intentionally works to make his Vox organ sound like a conjunto-styled accordion.<sup>51</sup>

Several years passed before the musicians who created the West Side Sound had success again at the national or international level. In the meantime, these pioneers of the West Side Sound took the genre in a number of directions before they converged again musically in the 1990s. Within San Antonio itself, the West Side Sound became chiefly Latin-influenced during the 1970s. Although not from San Antonio himself, Joe Hernandez, of Little Joe y La Familia, based in Temple, Texas, frequented the Alamo City during his tours of South Texas. Hernandez's band had originated as Little Joe and

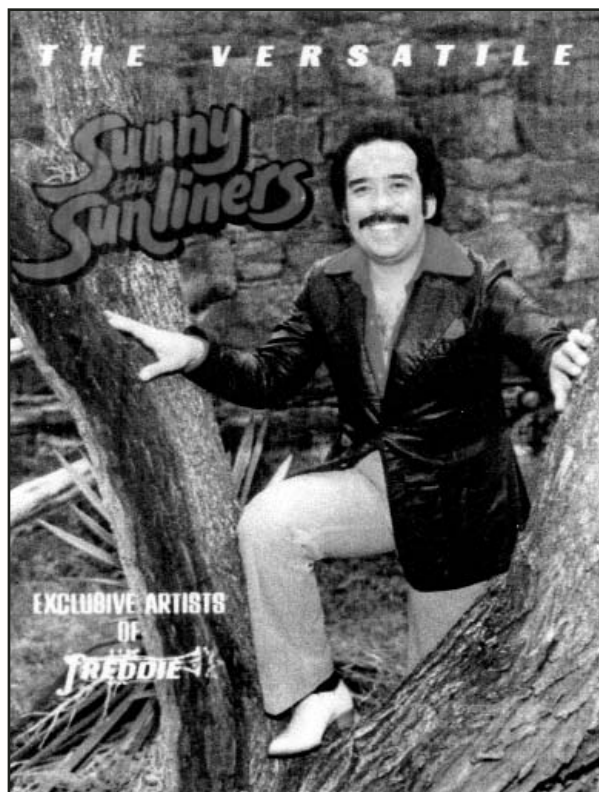
the Latinaires in 1959, wearing tailor-made suits and playing mostly pop music. By the early 1970s, however, the group was caught up in the burgeoning Chicano movement. They traded in their suits and middle-class *orquesta* image in favor of a more "hippie" look and began to mix polkas, corridos, rock and roll, and jazz into their repertoire, which also included songs with overt political messages.<sup>52</sup> According to the band's keyboard

player, Sauce Gonzalez, the abandonment of the suits was a cultural and political statement that reflected their blending of the hippie counter-culture with the growing Chicano movement. Hernandez and the group frequently appeared in San Antonio at such venues as the downtown Market Square.<sup>53</sup>

Of those musicians who had an impact on the West Side Sound, Joe Hernandez certainly was one of the most politically-oriented. At times, he spoke openly about police mistreatment of Mexican Americans in Texas cities, such as Dallas and Houston.<sup>54</sup> San Antonio native Frank Rodarte commented on Hernandez's political activism and willingness to use his musical career to address social issues. "He was writing more about the things that were happening at the time in the city like the abuse of police

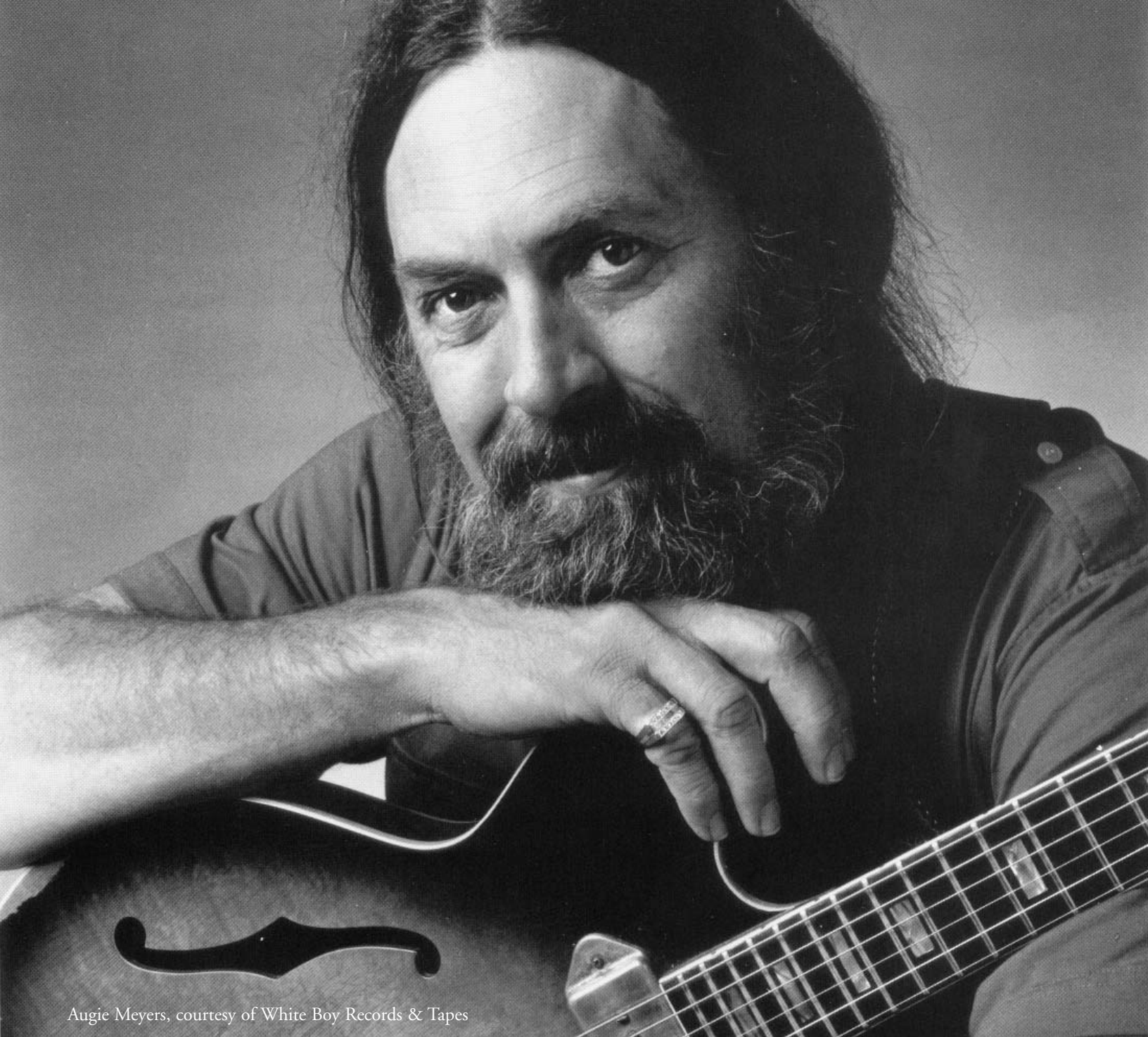
brutality, about abuse of the citizens...Abuse of the brown people by the white establishment. And sometimes even brown police officers abusing the [Mexican] people, too."<sup>55</sup>

Frank Rodarte was one West Side Sound pioneer that continued to draw heavily from African-American musical influences throughout the 1970s. Most of the founding bands, such as Charlie and the Jives, actually broke up during this time, but Rodarte remained very active. Documentary movie producer Jeremy Marre filmed Rodarte during a 1978 performance with his Jalapeño Blues Band at the Bexar County Jail in San Antonio.<sup>56</sup> In the film, Rodarte and his band are playing an upbeat blues shuffle called "Last Meal," and the narrator mistakenly reports that the song is a comment on the brutality of prison life. Rodarte refutes that claim. He insists that the song is not political but, instead, is intended to be humorous. "See, the song is called 'Last Meal,' and they're [the prisoners] getting a kick out of it, because he's requesting all



Sunny Ozuna, courtesy of Freddie records.





Augie Meyers, courtesy of White Boy Records & Tapes

these [things like] blue banana split. For his last meal he's requesting all these things."<sup>57</sup>

The 1970s also was a transitional time for Flaco Jiménez, one of the other leading figures of the West Side Sound. In 1973, Doug Sahm recruited Jiménez to play alongside Ry Cooder and Bob Dylan on Sahm's album *Doug Sahm and Band*. Working with such a high-profile and eclectic group allowed Jiménez to expand even further beyond his traditional conjunto roots. In an interview with Aaron Howard, Jiménez told of how Sahm helped introduce him to the larger music world. "Doug told me 'you're not supposed to play just that simple, traditional conjunto music.' There are so many players who stayed in the same crater like my papa did. Doug showed me there were other worlds out there."<sup>58</sup>

Ry Cooder also brought Flaco Jiménez out into "other worlds" even more.<sup>59</sup> Cooder, a musician and a musicologist, greatly appreciated the Tex-Mex style of Jiménez and his accordion. Jiménez recalls that Cooder "checked out conjunto and found out my history. He tracked me down. I never heard of him, but then he opened my eyes" and that meeting of the minds would prompt Jiménez to play for the first time in the larger international arena.<sup>60</sup> Since working with Dylan and Cooder, Jiménez has played with Dwight Yoakam, Charlie Musslewhite, and, on the Rolling Stones' "Sweethearts Together," from their 1994 CD *Voodoo Lounge*.

The West Side Sound also migrated northward up Interstate-35 to Austin during the early 1970s. Austin was the epicenter of the Progressive Country movement, in which hippies, rednecks,

college students, and other disparate groups seemed to set aside their socio-economic and ideological differences and revel in this new musical hybrid that celebrated blues, country, folk, rock and roll, R&B, and even reggae. In his book, *The Improbable Rise of Redneck Rock*, Jan Reid discusses the fact that Willie Nelson and many other musicians relocated to Austin in the early 1970s, because they were disillusioned with the state of the music industry in Nashville, New York, Los Angeles, and elsewhere. Nelson and others who moved to the Capitol City combined their diverse musical influences to spawn Progressive Country, sometimes called "Redneck Rock." Doug Sahm and Augie Meyers also were part of the 1970s migration to Austin. Both had grown weary of the San Francisco "hippie" scene, in which the Quintet had played for years. As Reid points out, "Sahm got extremely tired of the routine with the Sir Douglas

ago before they began extensive touring throughout the Southwest. Which is kind of amusing considering all the Tex-Mex originals, polkas, and Dixieland they play in comparison to pure country. And which gets real funny because every member of the high time octet is a San Antonio product.<sup>64</sup>

It is somewhat ironic that Meyers and Sahm were steeped in the unique musical environment of San Antonio, yet they were thought of by many fans as being an integral part of the Austin music community. In reality, Meyers and Sahm had simply brought the West Side Sound to Austin and made it part of the evolving musical environment there. Veteran Austin musician, Danny Roy Young, believes that much of the Austin music scene developed as it did because of Doug Sahm's presence there.

**(*The Texas Tornados* CD) featured a mix of ballads, country, R&B, conjunto, and rock and roll, sung in both English and Spanish.**

Quintet, lapsed into semi-retirement for a while, then, in 1973, enlisted a superstar array of sidemen that included Bob Dylan and Dr. John and resurfaced with a country-rock-blues album.<sup>61</sup> That album, of course, is the Doug Sahm and Band record, which also features Flaco Jiménez.

It was around this time, in the early 1970s, that Doug Sahm began spending more time in Austin. Reid acknowledges Sahm's contribution to the Austin scene, saying that "his music was still more a reflection of the diversity of San Antonio," pointing out that Sahm used a "scatter-gun approach," moving effortlessly from one genre to another. This approach proved to be widely popular in Austin. Sahm soon became a regular in Austin clubs, such as the famed Armadillo World Headquarters and Soap Creek Saloon. In so doing, Sahm not only brought the unique diversity of San Antonio's West Side Sound to Austin, but he also contributed significantly to the eclectic sound that has become a hallmark of the Austin music scene.<sup>62</sup>

Soon after Sahm moved to Austin, Augie Meyers arrived with his group, the Western Head Band. During the group's first performance there, Meyers quickly recognized the tremendous growth of the Austin music scene. Between songs, he turned to the audience and said, "Austin just keeps growing, don't it?"<sup>63</sup> Joe Nick Patoski, who later wrote Selena's biography, commented on The Western Head Band two years after Meyers started playing in Austin:

Their loose, easy going type of dance music definitely has a countrified flavor to it and the group first made their reputation here in Austin two years

Young says that the Progressive Country movement, lauded so publicly by *Rolling Stone*, "Started developing...in large part because of Doug, and all the players, all the hipsters, and all the artists all started coming up [from San Antonio and South Texas] to this part of the country...This was giving us something different; it had this great creative energy, and a huge part of it was that San Antonio sound. It was that great, great, Tex-Mex background...it was that conjunto/country, etc." Lucky Tomblin, a singer-songwriter and long-time friend of Sahm, says that "It was just a mix of all those styles. The conjunto, the Chicano, and the country-western."<sup>65</sup> Although this topic deserves further study, it is clear that, in regard to Austin in the 1970s, the West Side Sound had an important impact on the Progressive Country scene, which, in turn, helped redefine mainstream country music.

The most recent phase in the evolution of the West Side Sound occurred during the 1990s, with an unprecedented national and international groundswell in popularity of Latino music and culture. According to *San Antonio Express-News* columnist Ramiro Burr, one reason for this upswing in interest, especially among young Latinos, is that it became "OK, that it is uniquely American, to celebrate one's own culture, and that of our neighbors as well."<sup>66</sup> This celebration of collective culture had always been an essential part of the development of the West Side Sound. During the explosion of interest in Latino music during the 1990s, Meyers and Sahm came together once again, this time with Flaco Jiménez and Freddy Fender (born Baldemar Huerta), to create the super group, the Texas Tornados.

Meyers, Sahm, Jiménez, and Fender actually formed the



Texas Tornados in 1989. The following year, they released their first album, *Texas Tornados*. The CD was very much a reflection of those earlier influences from San Antonio's unique West Side Sound. It featured a mix of ballads, country, R&B, conjunto, and rock and roll, sung in both English and Spanish. In 1991, the album charted on Billboard's rock, Latin, and country charts, and also won a Grammy.<sup>67</sup> The West Side Horns, a horn section formed by several veteran San Antonio musicians, often

commented that, one of the two CDs they produced, *Juke Box Music*, included some of his favorite musicians. "We had George Raines from [Austin] on drums, and Jack Barber [on bass]," as well as one of Antone's favorite San Antonio vocalists, Randy Garibay. Following the recordings, Antone and his record label helped sponsor a tour of the group that included Los Angeles and New York.<sup>69</sup>

Sahm's second release on the Antone's label, *The Last Real*

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## I went down Nogalitos, looking for barbacoa and Big Red; Yes, I went down Nogalitos, looking for barbacoa and Big Red; I could have had some menudo, but I had some cabeza instead!

---

backed up the Tornados when they toured nationally and internationally. Spot Barnett, a founding member of the Horns, recalls that the group was the "icing" on the cake when they played behind the popular Tornados:

Now, this is what we did all through Europe. And I'm talkin' about London, Paris, Germany, Holland, Switzerland. They would put the light on us when we were actively playing...Yeah, we gave the show class. We gave it the icing.<sup>68</sup>

Other members of the West Side Horns include Rocky Morales, Louis Bustos, Al Gomez, and Sauce Gonzalez, who played keyboards with Sonny Ozuna on *American Bandstand* in 1963 and with Joe Hernandez during his heyday in the 1970s. Having the West Side Horns join the Texas Tornados to perform a variety of musical styles was perhaps the ultimate fruition of the West Side Sound. Because of the band's tremendous popularity worldwide, the unique musical amalgamation born in San Antonio in the 1950s was finally making its way out to nearly every corner of the globe during the 1990s. Sadly, this marriage of diverse musical talents did not last long. Dough Sahm died suddenly in 1999, and the Texas Tornados have remained largely inactive ever since.

Sahm also had been quite active as a solo artist at the same time that the Texas Tornados were becoming so internationally popular. He went back to his West Side Sound roots with two releases, *Juke Box Music* and *Last Real Texas Blues Band*, both released on Antone's Records. These CDs reflect a variety of regional influences, including Guitar Slim, T-Bone Walker, and other Texas and Louisiana blues artists. In 1988, Clifford Antone, owner of the legendary Austin blues club, Antone's, heard Sahm and Randy Garibay performing songs from some of these artists. Antone told them, "Let's record this; don't wait any longer," and they soon went into the studio. Antone later

*Texas Blues Band*, came in 1994 and included the West Side Horns. It featured covers by Lowell Fulson, T-Bone Walker, and several Louisiana "Swamp Pop" tunes, such as "Bad Boy" and "I'm a Fool to Care." The CD was recorded live at Antone's in Austin. Although it did not win, the record was nominated for a Grammy in 1995.

Sahm had developed a large international fan base long before he joined the Texas Tornados, and his worldwide popularity continued to grow throughout the 1990s. Debora Hanson, Sahm's personal manager during the final years of his life, recalls how popular he was in Europe. At a concert in Lucerne, Switzerland, in 1998, Sahm and his Last Real Texas Blues Band played at a casino in which the proprietors opened several doors to let the large crowd in. Hanson remembers that it was "wall to wall people. You couldn't get through the crowd; it was that tight." Perhaps, because of poor planning on the part of the casino's management, the musicians were brought into the building at the opposite end of the room from the stage and had to force their way through the massive crowd to get to the front of the hall. The band's normal routine was to start without Sahm to get the crowd warmed up and then bring him out on stage. When the time came for Sahm to appear, however, Hanson had to push people out of the way, so that Sahm could finally reach the stage. A similar situation occurred after the show, as hundreds of adoring fans tried to get close enough to touch Sahm.<sup>70</sup>

In Belgium, during the same tour, Sahm and the band were being transported in a van to and from the stage area at an outdoor festival. After the show, Hanson ushered the musicians into the van in an attempt to leave quickly. According to Hanson, when Sahm got into the van, "The fans were literally coming in right behind Doug." Hanson told the driver to "Drive on," but he would not move, because the frenzied fans were still trying to come through the door. Finally, in desperation, Hanson had to push her way to the front of the



van. Crawling over a startled Rocky Morales, she shut and locked the door and insisted that the driver “get going.” The driver finally began moving.<sup>71</sup>

Flaco Jiménez also gained further national and international recognition during the 1980s and 1990s. In addition to the Grammy he won with the Tornados, he received one for Best Mexican-American Music Performance in 1987 with *Ay Te Dejo en San Antonio*, another for Best Mexican-American Music Performance in 1995 with *Flaco Jiménez*, in 1996 as Best Mexican-American/Tejano Music Performance with the same recording from the previous year, and yet another Grammy in 1998 for the Tejano category with *Said and Done*. Jiménez says that, what works best for him is to play a combination of polkas, boleros, country, and even rock and roll. Jiménez, and most conjunto musicians, also have drawn from the musical traditions of the large German-American population around San Antonio. In fact, the accordion and the polka tradition probably entered the Mexican-American musical repertoire in the mid-1800s, as a result of the large influx of German immigrants into Central Texas around that time. As Jiménez describes it, “I mean, you know, sharing cultures, sharing music, blending different kinds of music together man, it’s just fun, fun, fun and having a good time. It’s the main thing.”<sup>72</sup>

Jiménez recorded his latest two CDs, *Sleepy Town* and *Squeeze Box King*, in his own studio. In keeping with his West Side Sound roots, these CDs feature a mix of country, conjunto, and rock and roll, with lyrics in both English and Spanish. Like Doug Sahm, Jiménez has become very popular in Europe and elsewhere throughout the world. The popularity of his accordion playing has spawned numerous conjunto bands in such seemingly unlikely places as Japan and the Netherlands.

Another key figure in the development of the West Side Sound was the late Randy Garibay. He never became as well known outside of Texas as Sahm, Meyers, and Jiménez, but Garibay’s rendition of the West Side Sound style, steeped heavily in blues and R&B, resonated well beyond the San Antonio music community. His three CDs, *Chicano Blues Man*, *Barbacoa Blues*, and *Invisible Society*, reflect a strong blues and R&B influence, but they also reveal the impact Mexican-American music had on Garibay, who grew up as a child of migrant Mexican farm workers. His signature song, “Barbacoa Blues,” which features Al Gomez on trumpet and Garibay on lead guitar, blends blues with distinct Chicano lyrics. His soulful voice, which has been compared to Bobby Bland’s, immediately cuts through to the listener:

*I went down Nogalitos, looking for barbacoa and Big Red;  
Yes, I went down Nogalitos, looking for barbacoa and Big Red;  
I could have had some menudo, but I had some cabeza instead!*

Garibay won a number of awards during his career. In 1994 and 1995, he won the Pura Vida Hispanic Music Award. In 1996, he received the West Side Rhythm and Blues Award, and just before Garibay died in 2002, Charlie Alvarado presented him the first Jiveman Award.<sup>73</sup> Garibay also was chosen as the featured performer at the 1998 Chicano Music Awards. Chicano filmmaker Efrain Guterrez perhaps paid Garibay the highest compliment of all when he used eight of his songs in the soundtrack for his 2001 film *Lowrider Spring Break en San Quilmas*. Before he passed away, Garibay teamed up with Ricardo Montalban and Cheech Marin in an ongoing effort to make Chicanos more “visible,” as he put it, to mainstream America. Garibay called it the “Power of visibility for Chicanos.”<sup>74</sup> To that end, he wrote the title track for his 2001 CD, *Invisible Society*. It is a hard rocking tune that carries a strong political message:

*I fought your wars, washed your cars  
I even shined your shoes.  
I cooked your meals, worked your fields  
But me you still refuse.  
Invisible society – is what you want to see.  
Invisible Society – won’t even look at me.*

Garibay’s songs represented how far some parts of Texas society had progressed, in terms of cross-cultural interaction, but they also reflected the persistent barriers to true social equality. For generations, Mexican Americans had faced widespread discrimination in employment, education, and other areas. This began to slowly change in the latter half of the twentieth century, but only after Mexican-American activists, including such musicians as Randy Garibay and Joe Hernandez, convinced other Americans to recognize the social, political, and economic significance of Mexican Americans.

Another pioneer of the West Side Sound who has left an indelible mark on Texas music is Clifford Scott. Before his death in 1993, the man who was known by his friends as “Scotty,” played throughout San Antonio. He did release one record, “Mr. Honky Tonk is Back in Town,” on the New Rose label in 1992.<sup>75</sup> Frank Rodarte has referred to Scott as his “mentor,” and, along with Randy Garibay, San Antonio jazz bassist George Prado, and others, Rodarte had the honor of playing at Scott’s funeral. Rodarte recalled, “His sister requested that I play at his funeral...I did ‘Honky Tonk’ at the open casket...We played all of Clifford’s favorite songs,” such as “There Is No Greater Love” and “As Time Goes By.”<sup>76</sup> In addition to the great respect he earned from fellow musicians, Clifford Scott’s legacy is his unique tenor saxophone style, which is still celebrated by Rodarte, Charlie Alvarado, Spot Barnett, Rocky Morales, Al Gomez, and Louis Bustos, of which

the latter four are current members of the West Side Horns.

The West Side Horns still perform today, both as a band and as a back up group for such acts as Cats Don't Sleep, Randy Garibay's former band. Garibay's brother, Ernie, now leads Cats Don't Sleep. Randy's daughter, Michelle Garibay-Carey, who sang a soulful rendition of "At Last" on *Invisible Society*, also performs with the group and with the modern jazz group, Planet Soul. The West Side Horns also performed on the recent CD, *I Heard it on the X*, by the eclectic Texas group Los Super Seven.

Augie Meyers continues to make and market his own CDs, including his latest, *Blame it on Love*, and he recently played organ on Bob Dylan's CD, *Love and Theft*. Although semi-retired, Flaco Jiménez still performs in the Alamo City and occasionally tours Europe. Frank Rodarte has a Catholic music ministry called Unidos that plays weekly in churches throughout San Antonio. Rodarte and his musical partner, Danny Ornales, also perform in small venues around the city.<sup>77</sup>

The West Side Sound musicians made substantial, if largely overlooked, contributions to the development of Texas and American music. They are a remarkable example of people from different ethnic and racial backgrounds who made a conscious decision to transcend social barriers and share their culture with others. The city of San Antonio has long been a

unique place, especially as a major urban center in the South, and its uniqueness has allowed for a more pluralistic, multi-cultural environment to flourish. The West Side Sound is a dynamic musical manifestation of that multi-culturalism present in San Antonio.

As a topic of scholarly research, the West Side Sound phenomenon deserves more attention. It should be recognized as a distinctly Texas genre that blends African-American, Mexican-American, Anglo-American, and even German-American influences into one complex yet broadly appealing style. In a very real sense, the West Side Sound reflects the rich and diverse cultural influences that have made Texas music so unique and dynamic. As historian Gary Hartman notes, "Partly because Texas was less strictly segregated than the Deep South, and partly because the rugged environment of the western frontier necessitated cooperation among traditionally disparate groups, people of different racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds interacted somewhat more freely in Texas than in other parts of the South, exchanging musical ideas and influences in the process."<sup>78</sup> The West Side Sound represents the open acceptance of such diverse cultural backgrounds and goes beyond simple tolerance to actually embracing the best that each of these ethnic groups has to offer. ■

## Notes

1. See Jim Beal, Jr. "Rockin' S.A.: Local Scene Always had a Spanish Accent," *San Antonio Express-News*, Section G, Page 1, October 4, 2000; Hank Harrison *San Antonio Jazz: The Golden Years*, (San Antonio: KLRN Learning Place, 1998); and Allen O. Olsen, "The Native Born Troubadours of San Antonio and the Roots of the West Side Sound," *Buddy*, April 2002. The author would like to thank Beal, Harrison, and the many musicians who gave of their time for oral interviews. Thanks also to Sauce Gonzalez, who has legal rights to the names *Sauce and the West Side Sound* and *Sauce and the West Side Horns*.
2. *Texas Monthly* has recently dubbed this song the number one Texas song of all time. See "The 100 Best Texas Songs," *Texas Monthly*, April 2004.
3. "Hey Baby, Que Paso?" is one well-known example. This song helped give rise to the city's "Puro San Antonio" tourist promotion.
4. During the early years of the West Side Sound, Garibay played with San Antonio bands, such as the Del Kings and Charlie and the Jives.
5. *La Prensa* March 11, 1956, 2, March 18, 1956, 2, and March 25, 1956, 2.
6. The Del Kings became *Los Blues* toward the end of their tenure at the Sahara and made one record for United Artists in 1971.
7. Jim Beal, Jr. "Rockin' S.A."
8. Few know of Scott's influence, as well as the fact that Scott joined Lionel Hampton's orchestra. See author's interviews with Spot Barnett, March 10, 2004, Charlie Alvarado, May 10, 2004, Rocky Morales, March 3, 2004, and Frank Rodarte, January 30, 2004.
9. Alan Govenar, "The Blues," *The Handbook of Texas Music*, edited by Roy Barkley, et al., (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 2003), 25.
10. Author's interview with Spot Barnett, March 10, 2004, 28.
11. For very good studies of these Latin styles and others, see Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr., "Música Tejana: Nuestra Música," *Journal of Texas Music History*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 24-35; See also the following by Manuel Peña: *Música Tejana: The Cultural Economy of Artistic Transformation*, (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 1999), *The Texas-Mexican Conjunto: History of a Working Class Music* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985), and *The Mexican-American Orquesta: Music, Culture and the Dialectic of Conflict* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999).
12. Author's interview with Augie Meyers, February 9, 2004, 2. Meyers says that he and Sahm, at the ages of 12 and 13, were able to sit in at the Eastwood Country Club and listen to such famous musicians as T-Bone Walker, Bobby Bland, and Albert King.
13. See Jan Reid, *The Improbable Rise of Redneck Rock* (Austin: Heidelberg Publishers, 1974); See also Cory Lock, "Counterculture Cowboys: Progressive Texas Country of the 1970s and 1980s," *The Journal of Texas Music History*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 15-23.
14. Author's interview with Charlie Alvarado, May 10, 2004, 13. In the formative period of the genre, Alvarado's "For the Rest of my Life" featured a multicultural variant of the West Side Sound. The song is clearly rhythm and blues, but the harmonies are in thirds, as is the sax solo, both of which are exemplary of the mariachi and bolero styles of voicing in thirds.
15. Elisabeth Gareis, "Intercultural Friendship: Five Case Studies of German Students in the USA," *Intercultural Studies*, April 2000, Vol. 21, Issue 1., 79-158.
16. Author's telephone interview with Rocky Morales, March 3, 2004.
17. Author's interview with Frank Rodarte, January 30, 2004, 11.
18. Daniel A. Yon, "Urban Portraits of Identity: on the problem of knowing culture and identity in intercultural studies," *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 2, 2000, 144.
19. Author's interview with Charlie Alvarado, May 10, 2004. Alvarado's exposure to African-American music came at a very early age when he and his brother shared a radio set on which they listened to such styles as Bebop. Alvarado later listened to San Antonio's Scratch Phillips and his "Ebony Theater," which aired on KCOR TV channel 41. Charlie and the Jives later appeared on that show.
20. Author's interview with Jack Barber, August 5, 2004.
21. Shi-Xu "Critical Pedagogy and Intercultural Communication: creating discourses of diversity, equality, common goals, and rational-moral motivation," *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 3, 2001, 279.
22. See Peña's *The Texas-Mexican Conjunto*, 164, in which he argues that "the existence of ethnic differences have often been the friction that sets off the spark of conflict in intercultural contact."
23. In *Critical Pedagogy and Intercultural Communication*, 283, Shi-Xu agrees that, although groups interact from the point of view

- of an ongoing power struggle, people do have the power to transform themselves. This is what the West Side Sounds musicians did.
24. Author's interview with Spot Barnett, 25. All of the musicians interviewed agreed that race is not an issue here. This refutes assertions made by music historians, such as Jon Michael Spencer, who insist that only African Americans can legitimately play black music. See Jon Michael Spencer *Blues and Evil* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1993).
  25. Interview with Spot Barnett; also see Robert A. Goldberg, "Racial Change on the Southern Periphery: The Case of San Antonio, Texas, 1960-1965," *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 49, No. 3 (Aug., 1983), 349-374. On page 351, Goldberg says "The city had never passed a segregation ordinance, but custom and the Police Department enforced racial segregation." Segregation was enforced in settings such as public education, public facilities, and civic activities. However African Americans did not express their displeasure of the existing order with more assertive methods that often were used elsewhere throughout the Deep South during this period.
  26. Goldberg, *Racial Change on the Southern Periphery*, 351. I am indebted to Dr. Thomas Clarkin of San Antonio College's history department for bringing this article to my attention.
  27. *Ibid.*, 350-352. Goldberg does an excellent job of describing the difficulties facing blacks in the city before 1960 and how religious leaders worked closely with city leaders to peacefully address segregationist issues.
  28. See "San Antonio Taking Calm Attitude Toward Mixing of Races in Schools," *San Antonio Light*, June 24, 1955, 14 A; "More San Antonio School Districts Integrate," *San Antonio Register*, July 22, 1955, 1; and "Stop Political Quibbling on Integration," *San Antonio Light*, August 28, 1955, 2B. The Catholic schools in San Antonio desegregated the year before. However, blacks still faced segregation in the Alamo City at lunch counters, movie theaters, and the annual policeman's ball. What is striking is that these issues were settled peacefully and without much incident.
  29. Bernard Brister, "Radio," *The Handbook of Texas Music*, 191-192.
  30. *San Antonio Light*, June 25, 1955, p. 2A; March 8, 1956, p. 4F; April 29, 1956, 4F.
  31. Cathy Brigham "Louisiana Hayride," *The Handbook of Texas Music*, 191-192.
  32. *San Antonio Light*, June 10, 1955, 24 and June 17, 1955,
  33. HEB took out a full page add on June 16, in which the grocery chain offered prizes, such as free tickets to the show, 45 Roy Rogers buck horses, and 60 Roy Rogers pup tents.
  34. David Nevin "Roy Rogers Puts on More Show than Rodeo," *San Antonio Light*, June 19, 1955, 8D.
  35. *San Antonio Light*, August 19, 1955, 1 and August 24, 1955, 1. The article of June 19 reported that the winner of the pre-school frontier costume award went to two Mexican-American siblings, Julio and Esmerelda Benavides.
  36. *San Antonio Light*, June 10, 1955, 22.
  37. Author's interview with Flaco Jiménez, April 2, 2004, 15; *La Prensa*, February 16 and February 12, 1956, 2; *La Prensa*, February 23, 1956, 2; and *La Prensa*, March 1, 1956, 2.
  38. *La Prensa*, March 25, 1956, 2.
  39. *La Prensa*, September 13, 1955, 2. This is one of the few large advertisements that the newspaper used to promote a conjunto group. This paper represented mostly middle-class Mexican Americans, who often looked down on the music of working-class Mexican Americans. For an analysis of the cultural tensions between working and middle-class Tejanos, see Peña's *Música Tejana and Texas-Mexican Conjunto*.
  40. *San Antonio News*, April 7, 1953, 3A.
  41. *La Prensa*, May 8, 1958, 16, and May 12 through 18, 16.
  42. *La Prensa*, March 19, 1956.
  43. Hank Harrison, *San Antonio Jazz: The Golden Age*, San Antonio: KLRN, 1998.
  44. Author's interview with Spot Barnett; *San Antonio Register*, October 16, 1953, 7, October 30, 1953, 7, November 2, 1953, 7, November 6, 1953, 7, November 13, 1953, 7, July 8, 1955, 7, and September 23, 1955, 7.
  45. Karla Peterson "Eastwood Country Club," *The Handbook of Texas Music*, 91. More open and frequent jam sessions were held at Club Ebony where Spot Barnett and the various combos he led there often invited Doug Sahn, Rocky Morales, Randy Garibay, and others to play with them.
  46. Beal, "Rockin' S.A."
  47. Author's interview with Augie Meyers.
  48. The *San Antonio Light* ran a four-part series on the rock and roll craze, largely reiterating the fears that local authorities had regarding the raucous nature of the genre. See the *Light* June 17-20, 1956.
  49. Author's interview with Charlie Alvarado, 8.
  50. Joe Nick Patoski "Uno, Dos, One, Two Tres, Quatro," *Journal of Texas Music History*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 12-14; Author's interview with Sauce Gonzalez and Spot Barnett, June 4, 2004. Gonzalez recalled that, while the band was told that they would be performing live, they did resort to lip-syncing.
  51. Coincidentally, Meaux also managed Sunny and the Sunglows. Apparently, neither Meyers nor Sahn really liked the "Fab Four."
  52. Interview with Augie Meyers. The Sir Douglas Quintet later moved to San Francisco and played at the Avalon Ballroom and Golden State Park. They had a minor hit in 1969 with "Mendocino."
  53. Peña, *The Mexican-American Orquesta*, 233. Peña calls this musical mixing within a song "bimusicality."
  54. Interview with Sauce Gonzalez and Spot Barnett, June 4, 2004.
  55. Documentary film producer Jeremy Marre's *Tex-Mex: Music of the Texas Mexican Borderlands*, (Newton, New Jersey: Shanachie, 1982). Hernandez, and later Garibay, were the only two who frequently spoke out on political issues. While Flaco Jiménez recorded a number of boleros during the 1960s, he admits that he did it more to put bread on his table than for his personal views of race and politics. See author's interview with Flaco Jiménez.
  56. Author's interview with Frank Rodarte, 12-13.
  57. Marre, *Tex-Mex*.
  58. Author's interview with Frank Rodarte 12. The narrator of *Tex-Mex* made another mistake, this time in his analysis of Flaco Jiménez's "Pantalone Blue Jeans," by saying that the song is about a young Chicano who cannot find his place in Anglo society. Jiménez refutes this claim. See author's interview with Flaco Jiménez, 33, as well as Ingrid Kokinda's 1986 oral interview with Jiménez in the University of Texas at San Antonio's Institute of Texan Cultures Archives, OHT 781.764 J61, 8.
  59. Aaron Howard, "Flaco Jiménez about fame and music on the Texas border," accessed at <http://www.rootsworld.com/interview/flaco.html>.
  60. Author's interview with Flaco Jiménez, 30.
  61. Howard, "Flaco Jiménez about fame and music on the Texas border."
  62. Reid, *The Improbable Rise of Redneck Rock*, 1-12, 43. Reid notes that the best known musician to tire of Nashville and return to Texas was Willie Nelson.
  63. *Ibid.* See also author's interviews with Debra Hanson, Gary Hartman, Lucky Tomblin, and Danny Roy Young, September 10, 2004.
  64. *Ibid.* 83.
  65. *Joe Nick Patoski Papers*, Southwestern Writer's Collection/Texas State University, San Marcos, Box 408, Folder 3, Document 1.
  66. Author's interview with Debora Hanson, Lucky Tomblin, and Danny Roy Young, September 10, 2004.
  67. Ramiro Burr, *The Billboard Guide to Tejano and Regional Mexican Music*, (New York: Billboard Books, 1999), 44.
  68. James Head, "Douglas Wayne Sahn," *The Handbook of Texas Music*, 281.
  69. Author's interview with Spot Barnett, March 10, 2004, 29-30.
  70. Author's interview with Clifford Antone, September 10, 2004.
  71. Author's interview with Debra Hanson, September 10, 2004.
  72. *Ibid.*
  73. Author's interview with Flaco Jiménez, April 2, 2004, 37.
  74. Jackie Potts, "Randy Beltran Garibay," *The Handbook of Texas Music*, 114. Part of the Jivemen Award given to Garibay states that "The first award of The Jivemen goes to the artist who wrote 'Where Are They Now?'" Garibay was a member of Charlie and the Jives in the early 1960s.
  75. Author's phone interview with Randy Garibay, November 9, 2000.
  76. Karla Peterson, "Clifford Scott," *The Handbook of Texas Music*, 284.
  77. Author's interview with Frank Rodarte, January 30, 2004, 26.
  78. Unfortunately Rodarte never recorded his own material after *Los Blues Volume 1* in 1971.
  79. Gary Hartman, "Country and Western Music," *The Handbook of Texas Music*, 66. It should be noted that this is not to suggest that intolerance and racial discrimination have not had a strong presence throughout Texas history. They certainly have. However, Texas tended to have a more ethnically diverse population and a less rigidly structured system of racial segregation than many other southern states.