



# **Women in Salsa**

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## Introduction

Salsa music is a popular musical style, which is nowadays a global phenomenon. The commercial term *Salsa*, which literally means ‘sauce’ in Spanish, promotes a popular music and dance style that was developed in the 1960s and 1970s in New York. It emerged in the Latin American boroughs called *barrios* of the city, based on Cuban and Puerto Rican styles as well as North American elements taken from Jazz and Rock. Due to the hybrid character of this new musical style, the music, at its beginning, had different names. Some continued to call this new genre *Guaracha* and considered it nothing other than Cuban music, whereas others named the musical style *Mambo* or simply *Latin music* and defined it as Puerto Rican.

In 1964, Jerry Mascucci, an Italian lawyer, and Johnny Pacheco, a Dominican musician, founded *Fania Records*. They quickly became the biggest promoters of all the big stars of the New York music scene. By the 1970s, due to their record label’s success, the term *Salsa* became the uniform name used to describe this new musical genre (Waxer, 2000:162).

The first form of Salsa was known for its aggressiveness and consequently called *Salsa dura*, meaning hard, strong Salsa<sup>1</sup>. In the 1980s, a change in style occurred, and a new kind of Salsa developed: *Salsa romantica*<sup>2</sup>. The tempo of the songs became slower, the sound was cleaned up with the help of new technical recording tools, and the rough character of *Salsa dura* was replaced by a smooth and more tranquil sound. However, Salsa continues to remain dance music even today, closely related to its Afro-Caribbean origins. It is generally accepted that if the audience does not dance during a concert, the band is not ‘good’. Salsa, therefore, cannot be considered independently from its dance form.

The academic research of this popular genre only started around the 1980s (Pacini Hernandez, 2003:14). Blum (1973) recognized the problems Salsa research posed in his often-cited article *Problems of Salsa research*. Blum suggests that most musicologists of that period consciously choose to study a foreign culture different of their own. He claims this option is politically safer, as the author can freely report without social and political backlash. Although all art is conceived and affected by the social and political environment, extra-musical social and political facts cannot be dismissed when studying music. (1973: 139).

Gradually, scholars started to approach the topic of Salsa in different ways. An important piece of research, which stresses the male dominance in Salsa music and the fact that male scholars neglect women’s participations, is Frances Aparicio’s book *Listening to Salsa: gender, Latin popular music, and Puerto Rican cultures*, released in 1998. Her work served as the key literature for my study, secondary to the article *Las Caleñas Son Como Las Flores: All-Women Salsa Bands in Cali, Colombia* by Lise Waxer (2001).

From primary literature, including interviews published on the Internet or in newspapers, as well as interviews with female musicians I conducted myself, I gained the most important data for this study. Through social networks, I made contacts with different female musicians, especially Colombians, who were enthusiastic about this study. Furthermore, I made use of English language literature.

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<sup>1</sup> For an example of Salsa dura please check video example 1.

<sup>2</sup> For an example of Salsa romantica please check video example 2.

It was through social networks, such as *Myspace* and *Facebook*, as well as my personal networks, that I promoted the online survey that I had set up for this research. Thanks to these networks, I could reach Latin American as well as ‘Western’ women, in order to get in touch with a broad audience and compare both categories of women. I was well aware of the fact that I would mainly reach a middle- and upper-class environment, since Internet access was needed in order to participate in the survey. All women that listen to Salsa music, and who have knowledge of the Spanish language, could take part. Practical musical knowledge was not required. In total, forty-one women successfully filled out the questionnaire, which was both in English and Spanish.

The survey’s goal was to obtain answers to some of the most intriguing questions related to the way women listen to Salsa music, and how they feel about the role of women in this musical genre.

One might ask the question: Why would a Luxembourgish woman choose this specific topic? Ever since my conservatory studies in Latin percussion began, I felt that I was not considered an ‘ordinary’ musician. Before a concert, the audience generally assumed that I would be the singer of the band. Then, after they saw me behind the congas, they seemed surprised.

Such experiences made me rethink my position as a female percussionist in the Salsa scene. I was also intrigued by the fact that somehow people saw me as an exception, and were most of the time insecure of how to treat me as a musician.

Through this paper, I hope to find some answers to the most important questions I asked myself during my studies, and as a professional, musician. Why are female musicians, and instrumentalists more specifically, still not regarded as a normal phenomenon? This study will not only elaborate the place of female musicians, but will also analyze the listening behavior of female Salsa fans. How are women reacting to the gendered structures within Salsa, and do women listen to other artists than men do? If they reject the eroticization of the female body in Salsa lyrics, do they support female artists in their struggles against male dominance?

Those are some of the topics that I will focus on in this study with regard to a woman’s role in Salsa music. The thesis’s title encompasses all the aspects of women in the Salsa field, and as such the research gives an overview of women’s position in this musical style. The study includes an analysis of female musicians and their performances of Salsa music, the way women are depicted in this patriarchal musical genre, and the listening behavior of female listeners.

This study is not meant to be a claim for feminist perspectives. Rather, I have attempted to assess the position of women in Salsa as objectively as possible, though the fact that I am a female *Salsera* myself is bound to play an important role in my point of view. I personally believe that musical decisions should be taken independently of one’s sex, and I support the musical environment in which one is judged based on quality only. Through this research, I would like to make the reader become aware of the fact that a growing number of female musicians are actively contributing to the field.



## 1. Reasons for women's absence

The first part of this study is meant to give an overview of the various reasons for women's absence in the professional music business, while focusing on Salsa music. The Puerto Rican scholar Frances Aparicio (2002: 136-137) made some in-depth research on this topic often neglected by scholars of popular music and culture. According to her and Vernon Boggs (1992), who wrote an article concerning 'Latin Ladies,' in which he makes reference to the results of a study led by Rene Lopez (1973)<sup>3</sup>, there exist different social and cultural reasons for this lack of female participation in music.

The underrepresentation, or *virtual exclusion* (Waxer, 2002: 204), of women in Latin American music in general, and specifically in Salsa music, can be clarified by examining the social and cultural environment of this musical style. I make use of this term expressed by various scholars (Myers, 2003; Placksin, 1982; Handy, 1983; O'Brien, 1995) who studied the role of women in music in order to emphasize the fact that female musicians actively contributed to the development of Salsa even though men rendered most of them invisible. However, one has to be aware of the unbalanced appearances of female musicians in opposition to their male colleagues, a dichotomy which can be explained by gender-role stereotypes that influence musical life. The fact is that throughout history, most female musicians were neglected; only a small number reached international recognition. Of the rare women who did manage to enter the professional musical space, the majority were vocalists.

Considering that during the 19<sup>th</sup> century music was still associated with femininity (Eklund Koza, 1991: 104), it is surprising that at the period of Salsa's development (1960s and 1970s), musical space was transformed into one of masculinity, barring women's involvement. As explained later in part 1.3 of this chapter, Salsa in its beginning was meant to underline the male identity of Latin American immigrants in New York, and excluded all female values and, accordingly, women's participation. As Eklund Koza (1991: 109) notices, it was due to the doctrine of separate spheres, defining women's domain as the domestic space that female musicians normally did not surpass an amateur level. In which way gender values defined a woman's life will be discussed in section 1.1 in detail. As Cook observed, Jane Austen female heroines played the piano for family and friends, but never for money (Cook, 1998: 106). A parallel can be observed in Latin American music, where women were normally known as singers, performing *Boleros* and singing lullabies for the children. They were limited to the "sentimental discourse in which patriarchal society (...) inscribe[d] [them]" (Aparicio, 2002: 137). Even later, when some singers successfully entered the public space, they kept close to the romantic ballad tradition. A more detailed study of female singers can be found in the following chapter (2) on *Salseras*<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately the original study by Rene Lopez was unavailable for further study.

<sup>4</sup> *Salsera* is the Spanish expression for female Salsa musicians and dancers.

## 1.1 Gender structures in Latin American families

The first and possibly the most important factor in this study is the role of the woman in the Latin American family <sup>5</sup>. In the past, the inescapable destiny of a Latin American girl was to get married and become a caring mother. If a young woman failed in doing so, she ran the risk of being classified by society as a ‘bad woman’ (Chant, 2003: 167), a label making reference to prostitutes. This designation contrasted with the category of ‘good’ women, meaning becoming mothers and wives (Chant, 2003: 142).

The Roman Catholic Church was the biggest promoter of such qualities and had an enormous impact on the patriarchal structure of Latin American families (Boggs, 1992: 110). Women were meant to follow the example of the Virgin Mary and to live their lives as “obedient wi[ves] and good mother[s]” (Boggs, 1992:110). Such gender roles had an effect on women’s exclusion from public life. The public spaces of music making were, for example, considered unsuitable for women. Afro-centric music, to which Latin American music and Salsa belong, had negative connotations among the white population, and as a consequence the practitioners of those styles of music experienced a bad reputation too (Boggs, 1992: 109). Music was seen as a “lowly occupation” (Boggs, 1992: 109, emphasis in the original), and thus women were prohibited to attend musical events in order to keep their image unharmed.

There was the belief that a woman, who was becoming a member of a band,

would be expected to travel with the mainly all-male group wherever it went. This, then, would afford her the opportunity to engage in all types of unsupervised behavior and succumb to temptations and thereby become a “spoiled woman.” (Boggs, 1992: 110, hyphens in the original)

This moralistic point of view is, however, only one way of looking at female musicians of the past. It should be noted that female musicians, and in particular singers, who gained fame, had enormous economic and social advantages, including access to civic spaces. The members of Cuba’s *Orquesta Anacaona*, for example, while performing in Paris, were part of the French bourgeoisie (Engelhard & Engelhard, 2008: liner notes *Anacaona: the Buena Vista sister’s club*).

This phenomenon appeared throughout the world and history. In other regions of the world, such female artists were defined as courtesans. They were creative and artistically skilled, and their duty was to “exchange artistic graces, elevated conversations, and sexual favors with male patrons” (Feldman & Gordon, 2006: 5). Even if most of them had lower-class origins, courtesans circulated in high-level environments, an opportunity most lower-class women were withheld from (Feldman & Gordon, 2006: 6). In China, for instance, singing, along with dancing, was especially considered an instrument of seduction. This gave courtesans professional

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<sup>5</sup> Throughout this study, the term ‘Latin American’ will be employed while talking about people living in Latin America, whereas the expression ‘*Latino/a*’ makes reference to Latin Americans living in the United States. Personally, I am not so convinced about the generalization of all Latin Americans as one homogenous group, but will still make use of the term here to differentiate between both categories of Latin Americans.

advantages, but made them ethically disadvantaged (Feldman & Gordon, 2006: 10). At times, the female act of singing itself became a sign of impropriety, and female vocalists were at once associated with courtesans (Feldman, 2006: 105). Through their singing voice, they controlled the (male) listener by detaching him from reason, which led to a comparison of courtesans with the mythological sirens (Gordon, 2006: 185), who bewitched the male admirers with their voice.

Today, it is still unclear if Afro-Caribbean female artists of the past can be classified as courtesans, since little information is accessible about most of them. Interestingly, one is tempted to believe that of these Afro-Caribbean singers for whom biographical information is available, hardly any were taking part in this tradition. Celia Cruz, for example, was married for forty-three years to her husband Pedro Knight and was always considered a ‘decent’ woman. Being a colored female singer, she was very aware of the risk of being judged as a mere sexual object, and as a result constantly aimed for recognition as a ‘serious’ singer and a ‘good’ wife “who achieved greatness through a lot of hardships that she always kept to herself” (Martin, cited in Negron-Muntaner, 2007:105).

Celia Cruz was obviously not engaging in the sexualized representation of female singers (or entertainers), but she was contrarily seen as “the kind of gracious lady that we would love to have for an aunt, a fairy godmother whose tender-heartedness works a healing magic on even the most troubled souls” (Hijuelos, cited in Negron-Muntaner, 2007:105).

The earlier mentioned *Orquesta Anacaona* is remembered among Cubans as the *singles’ orchestra* because the sisters were inseparable. This nickname does not in fact correspond to the truth since several<sup>6</sup> of the sisters were in reality married. However, this name illustrates the decent behavior of the musicians once off the stage. Through actions such as, for example, only accepting drinks from people if they were all together (Engelhard & Engelhard, 2008: liner notes *Anacaona: the Buena Vista sister’s club*), they made a clear differentiation between both spaces; stage and ‘normal’ private lives. One can thus suppose that the Cuban sisters were conscious about the Madonna/prostitute binary that surrounds Latin American women in general and female artists more specifically.

The detail that women of mixed ancestry were celebrated and adored for their sensuality, and who received a special status, as examples of Cuba and Brazil show us, can nevertheless not be dismissed. The particular case of the so-named *mulatas* will be treated in much more detail in part 1.2, where we can indeed discover some parallels with courtesans who have built up a reputation of being sexually available.

Already, much extensive research has been done on this complex subject. To study if female Latin American musicians could be considered courtesans would, however, go beyond the domain of this study.

Another reason for women’s lesser presence in the professional music sector is the fact that in Latin America, women were lacking musical training since on the one hand

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<sup>6</sup> There is a lack on information about how many of the sisters were indeed married. The documentary mentions the names of four, namely Ada, Xiomara, Millo, and Ondinda that had husbands. It is known that all of them had admirers, but it is not clear if besides the four sisters mentioned above, the rest ever became married.

educational programs did not offer courses in popular music styles, and on the other hand because the networks for such training were dominated by men (Aparicio, 2002: 137). Since music education is considered a leisure activity, girls or women were in most of the cases excluded from it. Frith (1981, cited in Bayton, 2006: 350) argues that girls were supposed to spend more time in the private space of the home and take more part in family life than male family members. This lack of free time consequently kept them apart from music education. Frith's argument, which is clearly class-dependent, is surely applicable to female Salsa musicians since Salsa, as most of the Afro-Caribbean popular music styles, represents the culture of the lowest social classes, where patriarchal gender roles are still to some extent present today.

For a girl or woman who belonged to the working class, learning how to professionally perform popular styles such as Salsa meant thus breaking with gender values by fighting constraints imposed on them by the parents, or in some cases boyfriends or husbands.

## 1.2 *The mulata*

Another closely related reason for women's neglect in the musical environment, is the image of the Latin American woman, and then more specifically the one of black and mixed ancestry, referred to as *mulatas*. This term referred to sexual desirability and still does on many occasions today (Caulfield cited in Chant, 2003: 138).

Stavans (cited in Chant, 2003: 138) writes about the eroticized representations of sensuality in the Latin American context and talks about women as "provocative, well built, sensual, lascivious, with indomitable, even bestial, nerve and intensity." However, *mulatas* are only sexually objectified in their youth. As soon as they age, they will be desexualized and 'blackened' and as a result lose their *mulata* status (Gilliam & Gilliam, 1999: 64).

They were often judged as 'bad women', meaning that they were treated mainly as sexual objects. It is interesting to realize that the *mulata*, while being an ethnic mixture of European and African ancestry, is eroticized, whereas the African women did not conform to 'white' beauty standards (Fraunhar, 2002: 219). Foote (in Chant, 2003: 139) explains that

the dominant discourse used black women's bodies as a vehicle for the presentation of Africans as primitive, animal-like and savage.

To use Homi Bhabha's words, *mulatas* were "almost the same, but not quite" (cited in Fraunhar, 2002: 220), and, due to their desirability, are visible, in contrast to the invisibility of the black woman, associated with slavery (Fraunhar, 2002: 224).

As a proverb of the 19<sup>th</sup> century says:

Blancas son para casar, negras para trabajar, y mulatas son para amar [White women are for marriage, black women are for labor, and mulatas are for love] (cited in Fraunhar, 2002: 219, translation by author)

In her critique on rap music, bell hooks observes in popular music the re-emergence of a color caste system. While analyzing video clips, she notices that the black women that are depicted are normally not dark black, but mainly light-skinned women, preferably with long, straightened hair, approaching the physical attributes of white women. *Mulatas* are thus today still considered more desirable than the ‘real’ black women (hooks interview published on YouTube).

Valdivia (2007) became aware of the same phenomenon in her study of Jennifer Lopez, who is today one of the most successful Latin American women in U.S. mainstream culture. As the analysis shows, a thinning of the body as well as a straightening of the hair is noticeable in the case of the latter. The author even mentions that Jennifer Lopez is considered “nearly white, but brown enough to count as different” (ibid.: 138). The same color caste system can be observed in Salsa music, where an obsession about the *mulata* and her body exists. This fixation is uttered in lyrics, video clips, album covers and the physical look of female artists. This subject will be treated throughout this study, and this is the reason why I will not discuss it in more detail at this point in this paper.

Specifically, female non-white musicians encountered (and still today do) many obstacles in their search for recognition as serious musicians; even among their fellow musicians (Boggs, 1992: 110). Viveros (in Chant, 2003: 138) mentioned that music and dance were, next to seduction and eroticism, recognized as domains in which black people stood out. As she continues,

these domains were [unfortunately] undervalued on three counts: morally, because the body and carnality were considered territories of sin; materially, because these skills did not raise people’s economic status, and symbolically, because on the scale of dominant values the physical was inferior to the spiritual.

Due to their mixed ancestry, *mulatas* are positioned between European Calvinist views and the African traditions. The European belief in spiritual and moral superiority over the physical stands in contrast to the African traditions where the body and its use have no sinful association. For moralists, *mulatas* represent a shameful offense, whereas her carnality is observed by African descendants as an ordinary feature of their traditions, where religion, music, and dance are inseparable. Paul Gilroy (1993, cited in Román-Velazquez, 1999: 117) pointed out that

racism has often resulted in blacks being thought of as more “authentic” in terms of musical and sexual expression of the body, whilst Europeans have often been associated more with the mind and less spontaneous types of musical performance.

Whiteness stands in connection with an intellectual behavior free from sexual desire, whereas non-Whiteness must be allied with nature “and the everyday needs of the body to (...) reproduce sexually” (Guzmán & Valdivia, 2004: 211).

Due to the Catholic Church’s prominence in Latin America, it was extremely hard for *mulata* women to enter the professional music circuit, where such prejudices

were prominent. Women that appeared on stage as professional musicians were seen as sexual toys for the entertainment of the all-male bands, and who enjoyed the stares of the musicians (Boggs, 1992: 111).

### 1.3 *Machismo in Salsa*

Salsa music up until now has been known for its *macho* characteristics. *Machismo* can best be understood as “a cult of exaggerated masculinity” (Chant, 2003: 14). According to Stevens (1973: 58), *machismo*’s cultural origins can be found in countries of the Mediterranean area, such as Italy and Spain, and was brought to Latin America by the European immigrants. Chant (ibid.: 15) mentions, next to the European roots, two other possible origins of *machismo*, making allusion to an ongoing debate on this subject. She refers in her study to Mirandé (1997), according to whom the macho attitude grew out of the humiliation of the indigenous men experienced during the time of Spanish conquerors. As further possible roots, Mirandé considers *machismo* being a pre-Columbian Aztec quality (Chant, 2003: 15). Ultimately, the origins of this male behavior remain ambiguous.

Stevens (1973: 58) explains that *machismo* can be found throughout all economic classes and is mostly present in Latin American countries where European and African cultures have fused into one heterogeneous nation. *Machismo* does not include only a constant assertion of a man’s power above a woman, but also among other men, an occurrence that was long denied by scholars. Thus, the means of *machismo* is to prove a man’s activeness (Chant, 2003: 16) and to act according to gender stereotypes while being amongst a group of other men (Stevens, 1973: 60). One can find different spaces throughout Latin America that are meant as environments for the reaffirmation and cultivation of “machista modes of *manliness*” (Chant, 2003: 16).

In Salsa’s context, such a space is, for instance, the *salsoteca* tradition of the Colombian city Cali. Those Salsa bars started first as private places, where men met to drink, talk and listen to Salsa music. Soon, they became a counter-movement to the luxurious nightclubs, which most of the working-class inhabitants could not afford (Waxer, 2002: 125). The many Salsa collectors, referred to as *melómanos*, preferred to listen and discuss their favorite records in company of other fans. *Salsoteca*’s environment became, according to Lise Waxer (2002: 142), a space characterized by male bonding rituals, including arguments about who knew the most about Salsa. Such comportment can be identified as a macho way of behaving because each of those men feels the urge to demonstrate his knowledge. Women are a minority in *salsotecas* since there exist only a few female collectors (Caicedo, personal communication, July 29<sup>th</sup> 2009), who only seldom participate in men’s discussions.

While analyzing Salsa dura (hard, strong Salsa), the style that developed during the 1960s and 1970s in the immigrant neighborhoods in New York, one becomes aware of a present *machismo*. Musicians, as well as producers, constructed a hypermasculinity through sound and words (Aparicio, 2002: 138), opposing feminine stereotypes (Washburne, 2008: 153) by excluding feminine values such as emotional intimacy and sentimental feelings (Waxer, 2002: 143).

As a result, male singers received stage names reflecting their masculinity. Gilberto Santa Rosa became *El Caballero de la Salsa* (the gentleman of the Salsa), and Tito

Rojas was called *El Gallo de la Salsa* (the rooster of the Salsa) (Valentin-Escobar, 2002: 181). Besides them, musicians of the Salsa dura era were frequently represented as ‘bad boys’. Willie Colon and Hector Lavoe were accepted without a doubt to the most famous bad boys of that time. One encountered this “bad-boy barrio construction” (Valentin-Escobar, 2002: 166) in song titles, such as *El Malo* (the bad one), but also on the album covers. The images they used reflected the organized crime of New York (Valentin-Escobar, 2002: 167). “Album covers become more than textual self-representations but are also self-reflexive metaperformances of diasporic identities and musical style” (Valentin-Escobar, 2002: 167).

The newer musical form, Salsa romantica, is dismissed by most *machistas* because of the political/emotional binary. Clearly, the gendered discourse connects the first quality to men and consequently to Salsa dura, whereas the latter quality is referring to the femininity of Salsa romantica (Aparicio, 2002: 140).

Salsa dura was famous for its aggressive and hard-driving sound reflecting masculine behavior and struggles. This genre can be distinguished from the newer Salsa romantica by its shrill, unpolished sound. The new Salsa did away with this hard-driving sound and became much softer and less aggressive. Consequently, Salsa romantica was linked to female sensuality in contrast to the macho character of Salsa dura. Marisol Berrios-Miranda (2004: 170) talks about the “whitening up” of Salsa.

At the beginning of Salsa dura, it was quite common to include violent verbalizations against women in Salsa lyrics. This tradition of “warlike articulation of (hetero) sexual relations in Latin(o) American society” (Aparicio, 1998: 155) has its roots in the Cuban *Bolero* style. The central theme of this tradition was the absence and loss of the beloved woman in a “romantic sensibility” (Grossberg cited in Aparicio, 1998: 136), whereas in Salsa a more disrespectful language was applied in order to underline women’s absence more as liberation rather than loss (Aparicio, 1998: 162). However, Aparicio is warning us to generalize the *machismo* attitude expressed in Salsa music simply as the nature of *all* Latin American lower-class men. According to her, the aggressiveness of Salsa dura has another more complex reason. Since Salsa cannot be separated from socio-political struggles the Latin American immigrants encountered in New York,

gender violence in Salsa music must be read as an articulation of the multilayered and contradictory relations of power and marginalization experienced by Latinos and Latinas whose daily lives were marked by under- and unemployment, economic disenfranchisement, racism, cultural marginalization, and violence on the part of social institutions, government, and the judicial system. (Aparicio, 1998: 158)

Aparicio is making reference to the American author, feminist and social activist bell hooks, who was talking about this phenomenon and stated that this kind of violence against women was the result of the capitalist world where men (in the case of Salsa, colored men of a lower social status) became disempowered and controlled by the government. Since they were not reacting to this injustice through revolutions, they were forced to demonstrate their power in the domestic space (hooks in Aparicio, 1998: 158).

Because of this masculine and aggressive character of Salsa music, women, despite their contributions to the development of the musical genre, stayed invisible. The few that entered this violent circle of Salsa music were taking the risk of losing their femininity (Negron-Muntaner, 2007: 106-107). Some of them succeeded and are recognized today as leading figures in Latin American music and Salsa. What did these women, who gained a favorable reception among the Salsa public, musicians and industry do? I hope to offer some answers in the following part of this study.

## **2 Analyses of *Salseras***

Below you will find analyses of some of the successful artists' careers. Material used for this study includes literature as well as interviews published on the Internet and some conducted by myself. This part will offer information on the reasons and methods used by some female musicians in order to enter the male-controlled industry of Salsa music.

The research takes into account some of the leading figures of Salsa, and contains a comparison of three different categories of *Salseras*: singers, all-women bands, and instrumentalists.

### **2.1 Singers**

Until recently (around the 1990s), women's participation in the Salsa world has been limited primarily to the role of vocalists, rendering the contributions of the rare women instrumentalists, bandleaders, composers and arrangers invisible (Aparicio 1998: 172-73). According to Aparicio, this tendency illustrates a continuous repression of the development of women's musical skills. As she continues,

women singers were allowed to perform onstage as long as they sing the words of others [normally men] and as long as, in some cases, they play to the desires and fantasies of a male audience whose gaze continues to objectify female bodies. (1998: 173)

Cristobal Diaz Ayala conducted a study in 1981 and noticed that 270 women that have been playing an active role in Afro-Hispanic music since the 1500s (Boggs, 1992: 110). Remarkable is that, of the names that Boggs (1992: 111) is pointing out in his reference to the study mentioned above, the majority of them were singers.

How can one explain this phenomenon?

In opposition to the earlier statement that female singers represent sexual availability, women are commonly known as mothers singing lullabies to their children in all cultures. This maternal tradition is universally accepted, and illustrates the age-old dichotomy of women as whore / Madonna, which becomes visible in a woman's singing practice (Green, 1997: 29).

A second musical domain where women excelled is Church singing. Especially colored women can be noticed as dominant figures in this musical space, becoming key-figures in Gospel music (Green, 1997: 37). Noteworthy is that, both, the domestic



as well as the religious context are the two areas patriarchal society defines as a decent woman's space to act.

Within patriarchy, men are thought to be in control of nature through the use of technology, whereas women are part of the male-controlled nature (Green, 1997: 28). Since for singing no technology is needed, a female vocalist stays in control of her body, associated with femininity and by that confirming the gender values (Green, 1997: 29). This can be seen as one explanation for the ongoing female singing tradition. A last reason could be the fact, that, since women are due to their restrictions excluded from any form of musical education (Bayton, 2006: 350), their voice was the only instrument available to them, possible to be exercised without formal training.

Corresponding to their prominence in the Salsa music business, singers are also most commonly studied by scholars who are treating the subject of women in Salsa.



**Picture 1: La Lupe, Celia Cruz, and La India**

Talking about Salsa music there are amongst scholars and Salsa *aficionados* (fans) three ladies that are the most prominent: Celia Cruz, the Queen of Salsa, La India, the Princess of Salsa, and the often overlooked La Lupe.

After having elaborated the biography of each of these singers, I will compare their strategies they used to enter the masculine world of Salsa.

### 2.1.1 Celia Cruz

The Cuban singer Ursula Hilaria Celia Caridad Cruz Alonso, which became later famous as Celia Cruz, was born on October 21<sup>st</sup> 1924 in one of Havana's poorest neighborhoods called Santos Suárez. She was the second oldest of four children, and the only musical family member. To the question who was pushing her to become a singer she answered that it was her mother who said *Nada, nada, tu sigue ahí* (Nothing, nothing, you continue with where you are). Her father did not agree with her choice to become an artist (Cobo, 2000, interview with Celia Cruz). He was afraid that Celia would become an 'easy' woman, and instead wanted her to finish her studies to become a teacher (Negrón-Muntaner, 2007: 104). Family and friends realized quickly that Celia was gifted with, what many considered, an extraordinary voice; Celia Cruz' voice color was rough and her vocal range was masculine, which was rather unusual for female singers.

She was always singing the smaller children to sleep, while adults were gathering around her to enjoy her voice (Burr, 2000).

Her career started with her participation in two contests; *the Tea Hour* where she won in the finals a little silver chain, and later the most famous Cuban musical competition called *The Supreme Court of Art* where she won the first prize (Valverde in Boggs, 1992: 114). From that moment on Celia's career took off. Soon afterwards, she performed with other singers such as Elsa Valladares and Aurora Lincheta, and sang for radio stations.



**Picture 2: Celia Cruz in 1950**

The first milestone in Celia Cruz' career was the moment she was asked to replace the Puerto Rican singer Mirta Silva in the well-established band *La Sonora Matancera*. She was however not accepted on her first attempt. Both, the public and the president of *Seeco Records* did have some objections against her. The public missed the former singer and was not pleased to see a “skinny negress” replacing *its* Mirta Silva (Boggs, 1992: 114).

After Fidel Castro gained power in 1959, Celia and the *Sonora Matancera*<sup>7</sup> left Cuba for good, and in 1962 Celia settled in New York. In the same year she married Pedro Knight, the first trumpeter of the band, to whom she stayed married until her death in 2003 (Burr, 2000).

After leaving the band with which she performed for fifteen years, she started recording with her lifelong friend Tito Puente and Johnny Pacheco, the musical director of Fania records, the biggest promoter and producer of Salsa music in New York.

Celia Cruz became famous for her improvisation skills, the ability to *sonear* (meaning to improvise in Salsa and Son music), and for her trademark word *Azucar*, meaning sugar in Spanish. She shaped the Salsa scene until her death (July 16<sup>th</sup> 2003), and had influenced a variety of artists, amongst others the Puerto Rican singer La India, who will be studied below in section 2.1.3.

How did Celia Cruz become the Queen of Salsa?

Celia Cruz was a remarkable personality and musician. She was perhaps the most famous *Salsera*, and is the only female musician acknowledged in a British documentary called *Salsa: Latin Pop Music in the Cities* (Aparicio, 2002: 136). She has been rewarded for her nearly sixty years of career with several titles of honors and awards, such as the *Smithsonian Lifetime Achievement Award*, a *National Medal of the Arts*, honorary doctorates from Yale University and the University of Miami (Burr, 2000b).

While studying her career as a singer, the most important feature one becomes aware of are her extraordinary musical skills. Whereas women were judged on their lack of ability to improvise in public (Marre and Charlton in Aparicio, 2002: 136), Celia Cruz

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<sup>7</sup> Video example 3 shows Celia Cruz performing with the *Sonora Matancera*

earned respect and admiration from other musicians, such as for example Cheo Feliciano, for possessing special musical qualities. He recognized that she was different, because, unlike the other female singers who only sang ‘girl stuff’, making reference to romantic songs, Celia Cruz was able to incorporate “the masculine way of singing and feminize it” (Negron-Muntaner, 2007: 107). Interestingly, while describing Celia Cruz’ voice, critics and fans mainly used terms emphasizing masculinity: raspy, tough, a powerful contralto etc. Those are only few examples of descriptions of the male vocal range of Celia Cruz (Negron-Muntaner, 2007: 107). She was compensating her masculine voice with her exaggerated costumes, handmade shoes, and wigs, underlining her femininity, a fact that Gamman (in Negron-Muntaner, 2007: 109) describes as the fear about being seen as too masculine. Celia Cruz regularly described herself as ugly and was ashamed of her body (cited in Negron-Muntaner, 2007: 104). This is the reason why she hid her body from “the *natural* conceptions of beauty” (Negron-Muntaner, 2007: 104). Dick Hebdige understands this ‘disguise’ as “an expression both of impotence and a kind of power (...) to disfigure a body that was considered ugly” (in Negron-Muntaner, 2007: 105). However, Celia Cruz did not veil herself. She wanted to be seen, and commented that, if it was impossible for her to draw attention through her own body, she wanted to achieve it with the help of her costumes (Negron-Muntaner, 2007:105). As Frances Negron-Muntaner (2007: 105) notices herself, it is important to understand that the costumes were not meant to

hide as covered up to avoid being perceived in the way that black women are racially engendered to signify available and “hot” sexuality. This move protected Celia against a certain discriminating look, one that threatened to consume her as a vulnerable object – female and black – and that may not have found her to embody black “beauty” in acceptable terms. (hyphens in original)

It is true that musicians, the media, or writers rarely called Celia Cruz sexy or attractive (Negron-Muntaner, 2007:105).

Nevertheless Celia Cruz always tried to be seen as a ‘decent’ woman. This was expressed by her inability to dance on stage in the beginnings of her professional performances, which nevertheless changed during her career. She described her later dancing nevertheless not as a sign of sexuality but as a manifestation of her “joy of singing” (Negron-Muntaner, 2007:105).

### **2.1.2 La Lupe**

Guadelupe Victoria Yoli, who was better known as La Lupe or La Yiyiyi, was born on December 23<sup>rd</sup> 1936 in Santiago de Cuba, and died on February 29<sup>th</sup> 1992 in the Bronx, New York. Contrary to the huge amount of biographical information about Celia Cruz, little is known about La Lupe’s early life. This lack of documentation and the silence about her career made La Lupe a mystic figure (Aparicio & Valentin-Escobar, 2004: 84). What is known is that her singing career started in Cuba, where she was, apart from being an elementary teacher by obligation, performing with a trio

called *Los Tropicuba* that played in various clubs. Soon the other two members did not agree anymore with her singing and style of performing. Even though the band split, La Lupe continued to perform in clubs. From the beginning on, she divided her public in two parts: one that loved her, and one that could not stand her (Ayala in Boggs, 1992: 116).

She is remembered for her extreme performances, and the term *Lupismo*, which will be explained in the following section, was created in order to describe her way of performing. *Lupismo* was however unacceptable for the revolutionary government of Cuba, and consequently La Lupe had to leave the island in 1961.

She moved to New York, where she at once became celebrated as the *Queen of Latin Soul*. La Lupe performed and recorded with Tito Puente which brought along a growth in popularity. It was important for her that people knew that he did not create her. "I have my own talent. But he was instrumental in my becoming famous here. The man had faith in me" (Aparicio & Valentin-Escobar, 2004: 90). It was however the same Tito Puente that made her disappear from the music scene when he fired her in 1968.

What is intriguing is the reality that, contrary to Celia Cruz, La Lupe is usually not acknowledged for her contributions to Salsa music (Aparicio & Valentin-Escobar, 2004: 91). As Richie Perez, who was a member of the Young Lords movement<sup>8</sup> said in an interview in 1996:

La Lupe was something else. Aside from the fact that women never got that much of a play in Latin music, La Lupe had already gone down when this music [Salsa] was coming up ... By the mid sixties she was gone already, she was not prominent. (Aparicio & Valentin-Escobar, 2004: 91)

Some musicians described her having been more of a performer or entertainer than a skilled singer. As La Lupe was clearly not recognized as singer, she was overlooked in the historical development of Salsa. Her exclusion from the Salsa history can also be explained by her aggressive behavior on stage, (Washburne, 2008: 159) which will be explained below. Aparicio believes that the fact that she "transgressively eroticized herself as a feminist act of resistance" (Aparicio, 1998: 183) was the reason for her neglect.

What was *Lupismo*?<sup>9</sup>

Washburne (2008: 159) calls La Lupe the *chusma diva par excellence*. José Esteban Muñoz (cited in Aparicio & Valentin-Escobar, 2004: 85) explains that *chusmería* finds its origins in the Caribbean bourgeoisie. A *chusma* was a person belonging to the working-class and whose behavior, style and way of talking did not correspond to the

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<sup>8</sup> The *Young Lords* were formed in 1959 in Chicago by Latin American immigrants (Ogbar, 2006: 154). They started as a group defending themselves against enemy gangs, that surrounded them, but in 1967, they realized that they should organize more beneficial actions. This led to an opposition to street violence and a peace treaty that was signed by all surrounding gangs (Ogbar, 2006: 156). On July 26<sup>th</sup> of 1969, a new section of the *Young Lords* was founded in New York.

<sup>9</sup> Both, video example 4 and 5 are illustrating La Lupe's style of performing

upper-class manners. La Lupe's *chusma* was articulated through her "subversive sexuality, (...) songs about illicit love, drinking, nomadism, and lack of social status" (Aparicio & Valentin-Escobar, 2004: 85), a demonstration of a displaced and bohemian identity.

La Lupe is remembered for her excess while performing. It is worth citing the following quote of Guillermo Cabrera Infante who remembers a performance of La Lupe at *La Red* he attended:

The woman would hit and scratch herself, and later bite herself, her hands, and her arms. Unhappy with this musical exorcism, she would throw herself against the background wall, hitting it with fists and with one or two movements of head, she would let loose, literally and metaphorically, her black hair. After hitting the props, she would attack the piano and the pianist with a new fury. All of this, miraculously, without stopping her singing and without losing the rhythms of the warm calypso that she transformed into a torrid, musical zone. (cited in Aparicio & Valentin-Escobar, 2004: 85)



**Picture 3: La Lupe**

La Lupe's performances were marked by self-eroticized, stripping acts, moments of possession or ecstasy, which were linked both to drug abuse and *Santería*<sup>10</sup> experiences (Aparicio & Valentin-Escobar, 2004: 83). Next to her unusual style of performing, La Lupe owned a very sultry voice, which she used to scream on and off-stage (Boggs, 1992: 117). Contrary to Celia Cruz, she emphasized her erotic movements with tight and revealing clothes, in order to cause a sensation (ibid.: 116), and a make-up style normally associated with prostitutes (Aparicio, 1998: 182).

Muñoz talks about this specific behavior of mixing both female (visual) and male (gestural) attributes, and calls it being "*between* well-known stereotypes of male and female essences" (cited in Washburne, 2008: 162, emphasis in the original). However, most scholars (Aparicio, 1998; Negron-Muntaner, 2007) would agree that La Lupe's style of performing has to be recognized as 'feminine', which includes in its

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<sup>10</sup> Santería is a syncretic religion spread all over the Caribbean region. The word Santería can be translated from Spanish as the "Way of the Saints" (wikipedia.org).

descriptions terms such as desiring, hysterical, and impossible to contain (Aparicio, 1998: 108, hyphens in original).

La India, besides being influenced by Celia Cruz, also uses La Lupe's style as a subtext. More detail will be offered in the following section treating La India's career.

### 2.1.3 La India

La India, whose original name is Linda Caballero, was born in the Bronx, New York on March 9<sup>th</sup> 1970. She counts to the new generation of *Salseras*, which are known for their 'crossover'. Like other singers, such as Corrine, Brenda K. Starr, and Lisette Meléndez, La India started her singing career in the English-spoken dance music scene (Aparicio, 2002: 142). She explains this musical choice as her wish to be 'Americanized'. Only later on, she realized her cultural connection to Salsa music, the musical style her parents used to listen to (Aparicio, 2002: 142).

She recorded her first Salsa album, which was presented by the well-known pianist Eddie Palmieri in 1992, and which had the appropriate title *Llegó la India via Eddie Palmieri* (La India is here, litt.: has arrived)<sup>11</sup>. La India, already in her early stage, did not stay close to the romantic Salsa, which was prominent at that time. Her music was defined by its cross-cultural nature, which included urban styles such as hip-hop, dance and R&B (Aparicio, 2002: 148).

It is obvious that La India was in her early career very much influenced by men. The case of her first album shows clearly how dependent she was from Eddie Palmieri. A second example is her later relationship with her ex-husband and producer Little Louie Vega. Nevertheless, the moment she signed a contract with Ralph Mercado, La India received more autonomy. She selected more songs written by women, and even composed herself some songs, reflecting the feminist ideology present in La India's work (Aparicio, 2002: 150). By that she is destabilizing the notions of gender, where normally men are performing control over women.

As stated earlier, both, Celia Cruz and La Lupe were heavily influencing the *Princess of Salsa*. The fact that she, identical to La Lupe, used the definite article "la" in front of her stage name, demonstrates a strong influence of the latter (Washburne, 2008: 158).

In her song *La voz de la experiencia*<sup>12</sup>, which she recorded in duet with Celia Cruz (on the album *Sobre el fuego*, RMM, 1997), she reveals her complex connection to both of her musical idols.

Frances Aparicio (2002: 151-155) is offering us a detailed analysis of this song, where she concludes with mentioning some central points of attention.

- The song breaks with the traditional male-female duet, showing a legacy and continuity in women singers and can therefore be recognized as a feminist statement.
- By including a Cuban and a Puerto Rican singer, the song becomes an utterance of the transnational character of Salsa.
- La India is singing thanks to Celia Cruz, who served as role model to her, and Celia Cruz is answering her with the advise of always keeping her autonomy.

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<sup>11</sup> Video example 6 is a performance of the song *Mi Primera Rumba*, from *La India's first album*.

<sup>12</sup> The reader is invited to review video example 7

- The presence of Santeria allusions illustrates La India's understanding of La Lupe's style of performing.
- "The subversive nature of La Lupe's utterance in a song that is officially an homage to Celia has to do with the multiple, dialogic strands of female influences that La India, perhaps, wants to foreground" (Aparicio, 2002: 155).

#### La India's style of performing



**Picture 4: La India Live**



**Picture 5: Cover of *Llegó la India***

La India uses various strategies in order to "speak the culturally unspeakable within the Salsa community" (Washburne, 2008: 156). She counters the patriarchal representation of women and 'sings back'. Through her songs, she is telling stories about women that are hurt or left by men, and do not need them (Washburne, 2008: 156). Her singing style, which includes shouts comparable to La Lupe's screams, is meant to emphasize her feminist message.

Her voice is not the only feature resembling La India's idols'. Her looks, dramatic make-up, and her large hair, that "projected a sexualized *loudness*" (Washburne, 2008: 156, emphasis in the original) make allusion to La Lupe.

In general one can observe, that La India is adopting the 'bad guy' image to herself (Washburne, 2008: 157), which includes a style of performing that is highly eroticized. As the images above show, La India liked to smoke large cigars on stage, while slowly playing with it. This can be best understood as a phallic symbol (Washburne, 2008: 159). Gus Puleo (cited in Aparicio, 2002: 149) sees this act

not only as androgynous and transgressively masculine, but it also evokes a sense of promise and possibility, a vision of freedom. Feminist in the sense that she dares to transgress sexist boundaries.

The cigar makes additionally reference to *Santeria*, where women priestesses use smoke for cleaning rituals. In the context of La India Washburne compares it to a cleaning of patriarchal structures (Washburne, 2008: 159).

Furthermore, La India was notorious for aggressiveness on stage, acting towards her band members as stage props only. She wanted to clarify who is the boss, and did not accept female band members in order to avoid competition on stage (personal communication cited in Washburne, 2008: 160).

Nowadays La India tempered her behavior, does not smoke cigars anymore and uses a less controversial language while performing (Washburne, 2008: 163).

In the online survey I was explicitly asking the participants' opinion on La India's musical style and her image, since she is an artist that is splitting the Salsa audience into two opposing poles (the same way La Lupe already did).

It is extremely interesting what the participants of my survey thought of La India. Whereas 68 %<sup>13</sup> replied that they knew La India, 57 % stated that they liked her music genre. Among the fans of La India's musical style, 56 % were Latin American women, including Colombians, Cubans, Venezuelans, and Peruvians. It is noteworthy that most of the Latin Americans that liked La India's musical style mentioned her powerful voice as the reason.

To the question whether they liked her image or not, only 42 % answered with yes. From those women that liked her image, 83 % were Latin Americans, including Cubans, Uruguayans, Colombians, Venezuelans, Peruvians, Nuyoricans and Mexicans. The reasons for being a fan of La India's image included the following comments:

*I like her image because of the power that she is projecting* (Colombian woman)

*She is herself* (Peruvian woman)

*She represents what a Latina is* (Nuyoricana woman)

Those women that do not like her image think that she is too much of a product, and that she does not look friendly but instead really vulgar.

#### **2.1.4 Comparison of the three Ladies**

While comparing the three singers who define a feminist genealogy in Salsa music, we realize that the singers analyzed above applied opposing strategies in order to be heard. Whereas La India is claiming an influence of both, La Lupe and Celia Cruz, it is clear, after having analyzed her style of performing, that the strongest inspiration came from the invisible La Lupe. Remarkable is the fact that La India, "through the memory of La Lupe (...) appropriates old signifier including their own bod[y]", [remaking it] into spaces of potential freedom" (Aparicio, 2002: 149). The most apparent restoring can be observed in the 'copied' macho image that La India is applying on stage. As stated before the fact that La India uses, similar to La Lupe the definite article 'la' in front of her stage name, is a further proof of La Lupe's influence. The use of a stage name is according to Washburne a method for creating a distance to the private life, and constructing as a result a "staged identity, freed from the constraints of traditional conceptions of what it means to be Latina" (2008: 153). This distanced identity allowed La Lupe and La India to 'masculine' (Aparicio, 2002: 148) themselves on stage. Both singers performed a *transgendering*, a term Rosalind Morris (1995) applied, or a *masquerade* (Washburne, 2008), which makes allusion to a constant performance of neither male nor female positions (Washburne, 2008: 161). As mentioned earlier, La India, as well as La Lupe performed an 'in-between' gender identity by using extremely female looks in combination with a masculine, macho

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<sup>13</sup> The percent mentioned here are or rounded up or off. For the precise numbers the reader is invited to review attachment 3.



behavior, and consequently questioned such dichotomy notions of feminine and masculine (Aparicio, 2002: 147).

Celia Cruz, on the other hand, chose for a different approach. Since her voice color, as well as her facial traits, was regularly defined as masculine, Celia Cruz used her extravagant costumes to create a distance to her private life and to offer the public a feminine act. Washburne calls the image of Celia Cruz one of an “explicitly feminine grande dame” (2008: 157). One can conclude that, while La India and La Lupe were aiming for ‘covering’ their feminine side, Celia Cruz was constantly underlining the fact that she is a woman, and kept in that way her masculine traits (voice, way of singing) in balance with the female ones (costumes including high-heels, sensibility).

Comparing the musical participation and qualities, one has to be aware of the fact that, whereas Celia Cruz was praised for her masculine way of singing, she followed the female tradition of interpreting songs only and not participating in the production and arrangement process. Contrary to her, La India aimed for participating on a higher level in the production process, with the purpose of breaking with the traditional roles of female vocalists and creating a feminist project engaged in rendering women’s participation and influence in Salsa music visible (Aparicio, 2002: 150).

## ***2.2 All-women bands***

The creation of all-women bands cannot only be exclusively observed in Latin music. As early as in the nineteenth century, European women gathered and founded musical formations (Waxer, 2001: 233) consisting of women only. Later, in the 1930s and 40s, the same trend could be observe in the field of Jazz in the United States and in Great Britain. As in the case of Latin American ‘ladies orchestras’, women throughout the continent faced the macho obstacles they met in the music business, while trying to challenge gender structures.

The most remarkable phenomenon appeared between 1989 and 1995, where an exceptional amount of all-women Salsa bands appeared in the Colombian city of Cali, known among Salsa fans as the capital of Salsa, and covered nearly one-fifth of the local scene (Waxer, 2001: 228). However, these *orquestas femeninas*, as they are called in Cali, were not the first Latin American all-women bands. Already in the early 1930s Cuba experienced a band formed out of talented sisters, called *Anacaona*. The seven Cuban sisters, with their septet they had named after a famous indigenous woman resisting Spanish invasion, were among the first female artists leaving a lasting impression on Afro-Caribbean music (Boggs, 1992: 111). It was due to their charming smiles, that the girls could promote the Cuban *Son*, which before was considered, due to its African elements, as primitive music by the Cuban bourgeoisie. *Anacaona* was declared a part of the island’s cultural heritage, and was the oldest *orquesta*. The elements responsible for such a long successful career were the musicians’ professionalism, their musical variety and their charming stage presence. They were the only surviving all-women band at a time, where patriarchal gender roles were dominating not only the music business but Cuban and Latin American society in

general (Engelhard & Engelhard, 2008: liner notes Anacaona: the Buena Vista sister's club)<sup>14</sup>.

In this section, through a study of Colombian bands, and in specific the band *D'Cache*, a more in-depth understanding of the special musical occurrence of all-women bands will be obtained.

### 2.2.1 Colombian *orquestas femeninas*: general thoughts

Lise Waxer (2001) did an extremely valuable study on the Caleñan bands. Her research will serve as main source for the overview on all-women Salsa bands of Cali offered in this section. The focus lies on the Colombian bands, since it is an exceptional case. In no other country did a comparable amount of all-women bands appear in such a short period. The women bands emerged in a period, where Colombian women in general tried to face patriarchal social structures in which men exercised control over them economically, socially and musically. On a Latin American dance floor for example, men controlled their wives, sisters or girlfriends through social codes that dictated with whom they could interact (Waxer, 2001: 231). On the active local music scene men furthermore rendered women invisible even if they have always been participating in the cultural life as fans, dance partners or record collectors (ibid.: 234). However, women of the city of Cali were celebrated for their beauty. Caleños even believe that women from Cali are the most beautiful and sensual women of whole Colombia.

As Waxer notices, Caleñas used their image as beautiful flowers, as described in the tune *Las Caleñas son como las flores* (the Caleñan women are like the flowers), which is a homage to Caleñas' beauty, and shifted the patriarchal attitude that was considering women as mere "objects of aesthetic and sensuous contemplation" (Waxer, 2001: 229). *Orquestas femeninas* consequently upheld this image while at the same time surpassing it (2001: 229).

However, one has to be aware of the fact that most of the female artists or bands could not acquire complete autonomy, and were consequently led by male managers who influenced their public image in a great deal (ibid.: 231). As a result, in order to enjoy success, all-women bands had no alternative than accepting the eroticized image of women present in Colombian media and music industry (2001: 235). Next to tight jeans, mini skirts, high-heels and make-up, the music industry supported the sexual image of those bands with names making illusion to feminine qualities, such as sweetness or subtle eroticism (ibid.: 238). *Son de Azucar* (the word *Son* making reference to the Cuban Son style, but at the same time meaning "they are" out of sugar) and *Canela* (cinnamon) are two examples of such band names.

As the author Lise Waxer (2001: 238-239) continues:

In Latin America and the Caribbean, however, "sugar" not only references feminine docility and good-natured

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<sup>14</sup> Video example 8 is a video clip of *Anacaona's* song *Espiritu Burlon*. You will here a live recording while watching original pictures of the orchestra.

cheerfulness, but also points to the fantasy of eroticism and potent sensuality stereotypically associated with the mulata (woman of mixed African and European ancestry) of sugar-producing regions (Kutzinski 1993). A variant on this theme, "sugar 'n' spice," is suggested by the name Canela (cinnamon). The term canela also suggests the golden-brown skin tone of the mulata and mestiza (mixed indigenous-European) women that predominate in Cali and Cuba, and, like the term "azucar," once again indexes the erotic qualities ascribed to these women. The fact that most of the women performing in Cali's orquestas femeninas fall into these racial categories (mulata and mestiza) further reinforces the sexual stereotyping.



**Picture 6: Son de Azucar, the first Colombian all-women band (1995 publicity poster)**

An additional factor, applied for the reinforcement of the sexualized image, was the decision to only put the musicians' first names on the albums, which reminds Waxer (2001: 239) of calendar girls published in *Playboy*. In that period the young musicians (the average age during the mid 1990s was nineteen) were judged as cute and child-like, which changed fortunately later on.

Frances Aparicio (1998: 173) offers us the two main factors that enabled women in Cali to become musicians: the presence of institutions offering the possibility to study popular music, and the discipline and professional attitude of Colombian women.

Music education was democratized in Cali in the 1980s, and provided for a larger sector of the population, instead of only for a small elite, music theory and instrumental classes for an affordable prize (Waxer, 2001: 240). The increase in musical education was of major importance for the appearance of all-women Salsa bands, because it was due to this opportunity that female musicians of mixed ancestry and of a lower-class status (of which most of the female musicians were originating from) could benefit from musical training (2001: 240).

Aparicio enumerates four of such institutions: the *Instituto Popular de Cultura*, the University of Valle, *Bellas Arte*, and the *Academia de Música Valdiri* (1998: 173).

An interesting detail is then yet again, that nobody mentions female teachers. While talking to the Colombian percussionist Angie Zabaleta, she confirmed this matter by listing her teachers, which were all male percussion players (personal communication on July 9<sup>th</sup> 2009).

Lise Waxer also commented Caleñas' professional attitude, which is a reflection of a "strong entrepreneurial spirit":

Although their image is strongly shaped by male standards, they have been able to use this to their own ends, proving that their hard work and organizational skills have been just as important in their success. (2001: 244)

Talking to Francia Elena Barrera, the director of *D'Cache*, it became clear that such bands had a strong professional approach. *D'Cache* is holding rehearsals at least once a week and is regularly arranging meetings in order to evaluate and work on the progress of the band (personal communication on July 13<sup>th</sup> 2009).

This entrepreneurship is then only possible if women have enough spare time to commit for their musical occupation. Considering the fact that in a patriarchal society women were meant to occupy the conventional roles of wives and mothers, the emergence of the *orquestas femeninas* marked a clear break from such structures. Waxer (2001) included this factor in her study and offers the following results. According to her research, out of the approximately 120 female salsa musicians in the early 1990s, the majority of them was young (ranging from fifteen to thirty years old, with the majority between seventeen and twenty-two years), unmarried, and only six of them were mothers whilst working as professional musicians (ibid.: 241).

Those numbers clearly demonstrate an obvious rejection of traditional, Church promoted gender roles. Waxer makes reference to Ellen Koskoff's 'gender reversal' category, where women enter male-controlled domains, and challenge the traditional, patriarchal values (2001: 253). This freedom was important for Colombian women, who were used to have separate social roles than men that disabled them from playing an active part in the public entertainment space. Waxer mentions that, because of this gender separation, Caleñas were more at ease with forming all-women bands than breaking into the male bands (ibid.: 252).

On the other hand, female musicians also chose this musical formation in order to accentuate the empowerment of women. Olga Lucia Rivas, bassist and founder of Son de Azucar said:

La idea inicialmente, pues, como te digo, fue como para hacer, por hobby ... Ay, que formemos un grupo diferente, hagamole [sic], de pronto nos presentamos en algun sitio. Pero que fuéramos todas mujeres porque queriamos como causar impacto, no? O sea no era la misma orquesta mixta, y los grupos de hombres y de

pronto una mujer. No. La idea era como impactar ... y todo el mundo viera que fueron, que eran mujeres.

[The initial idea was, how do I tell you, was like to do something as a hobby ... "Let's put together something different, maybe we'll get to perform some place." But we wanted it to be all women, because we wanted to have an impact, right? That is, not like your standard mixed orquesta, or the groups with men and maybe one woman. No. The idea was to have an impact ... and that everyone sees that it was all women.] (cited in Waxer, 2001: 237, translation by author)

I received a similar answer from Francia Elena Barrera (personal communication on July 13<sup>th</sup> 2009):

Tocamos en una orquesta femenina porque, hacemos parte de un movimiento importante en la reivindicación de las capacidades y del talento de las mujeres en Salsa, consideramos que tenemos que trabajar fuerte en ese sentido pues la tradición ha sido principalmente de los hombres, no ha sido fácil, pues sigue existiendo el machismo

[We play in an all-women band because we belong to an important movement of the re-integration of women's capacities and talents in the world of Salsa. We consider that we have to work hard because the tradition [of Salsa] has been an area of men. It was not easy, since machismo still exists.] (own translation, punctuation added by myself to clarify breaks)

### 2.2.2 The image query

Considering the fact that bands such as *D'Cache* are striving towards an empowerment of female musicians, a study of their image is fascinating<sup>15</sup>. Aparicio (1998: 143) is analyzing the beach chronicles of the Puerto Rican author Edgardo Rodríguez Juliá, where he is talking about Salsa as based on "a culture of male pleasure, gaze and desire" (1998: 143). Aparicio, consequently, draws the parallel between musical and erotic performances. Observing a performance by all-women bands, one can get the impression that women are "*selling* out to male-defined standards" (Waxer, 2001: 242, emphasis in the original).

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<sup>15</sup> Please consider video example 9.



**Picture 7: D'Cache live**

In the case of Cali's *orquestas femeninas*, you do not get the impression that the musicians feel uncomfortable in asserting a sexy self-image. A performance is filled with eroticized elements, such as high-heels, short outfits, and sexy choreographies. One can agree on that Latin American women in general insist on their right to express sexual desire and to be in control of their bodies (Aparicio, 1998: 149). They demonstrate this by for example choosing short and tight clothes and wearing high-heels. This feminist idea stands in vast contrast to Anglo feminism, where women try to blur the differences of male and female by using no make-up and “resisting the dictate of the fashion” (ibid.: 151).

Following Aparicio, and using her strong terms, “to *look* like a puta” (prostitute), [which is clearly a “western” observation], cannot be read with Anglo feminist eyes. The sexualized image of Latin American women must be understood as a rejection of the sexual repression of women, influenced mainly by the Catholic Church. The erotic outfit of Latin American women must thus be read as “a repossession of one's body away from the higher social powers, such as parents, church, and society” (Aparicio, 1998: 151).

As Stuart Hall stated, we should be aware of the fact that we are all coming from one particular history and culture and that we are, while writing or talking, stuck to one exclusive place and time (cited in Mendible, 2007: 20).

Aparicio is therefore also warning us not to make use of, what she calls, ‘middle-class Anglo-American feminist stereotypes’ while analyzing Latin American *Salseras*.

Taking *salseras* seriously means grappling with the ideological complexities behind feminist Latina singers who wear high heels and bright red lipstick and perform semi-naked, a tension that emerges, in part, from imposing Anglo feminist values on a particular Latina aesthetics of the body. (cited in Waxer, 2001: 243)

It is also relevant in this discussion to be aware of the fact that aesthetics of beauty is not static but differs from culture to culture and over time. As a study led by Maya A. Poran in 2002 shows, Latina, or Latin American women, respond to different

standards of beauty than white women <sup>16</sup>. She claims in her conclusions for a *reconceptualization* of beauty standards, including race experiences in order to include the different responses and perceptions of colored women (Poran, 2002). It is consequently not adequate to impose ‘western’ and ‘white’ norms on Latin American women, since both cultures experience beauty differently.

While studying Latin American beauty standards described in the media, song lyrics, or covers of albums, one realizes an obsession for specific female body parts. I do not attempt to fall back on such stereotypes produced through myth, desire and marketing. Furthermore it is not the intention of this research to bind Latin American women only to their eroticized bodies and sexuality with a set of fixed values and traits. However, through a cautious study of song lyrics and albums covers, it becomes evident, that several body parts, such as the legs, and a woman’s curves, and specifically the buttocks, are almost worship-alike celebrated in Salsa music.

It is intriguing to observe in this context *orquestas femeninas* with their almost contradictory image of sexually attractiveness while performing. The question one has to ask is, by which of Koskoff’s categories of reinforcing, enacting, protesting, or challenging a society’s gender structures, such bands are motivated?

Lise Waxer concluded in her article (2001: 253) that

although the bands reconfirm established social/sexual norms in some ways (e.g., women as sex objects), they also challenge established gender roles, in allowing women to move with more freedom than ever before in the realm of public entertainment.

She believes that this occasionally divergent behavior of all-women bands serves to “maximize the economic and prestige opportunities for the subordinate group” [which is in the case of Salsa musicians, women] (2001: 254).

I was interested in receiving comments about this topic of Caleñas, themselves, and asked members of various bands to explain to me their decisions for the used stage outfits.

As Francia Elena Barrera, the director of *D’Cache* replied (personal communication on July 23<sup>rd</sup> 2009):

Nuestro vestuario responde en parte a la costumbre de nuestras mujeres latinas y particularmente a las caleñas que vivimos en una ciudad con un clima cálido. Obviamente tratamos de mantener un vestuario vistoso para mantener una imagen atractiva y fresca, aunque tenemos vestuario más sobrios dependiendo del evento en el cual actuamos.

[Our clothes respond in part to the habits of Latin American women, and then specifically to Caleñas, who are living in a city with an extreme warm climate.

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<sup>16</sup> For a detailed analysis of this specific subject the reader is advised to review the original study of Poran.

Obviously, we are trying to dress flamboyantly in order to maintain an attractive and fresh image. Although, we also have more sober clothes, depending on the event we are performing.] (own translation)

Alberto Caicedo (July 15<sup>th</sup> 2009), a Colombian musician who has lived and worked in Cali confirmed this attitude and stated that

if, in general, a band is not looking good, people do not pay attention to them. The thing with Latin American women is that they always want to look good ... if a Colombian woman goes to the nightclub she dresses really elegant and sexy. So if you have women performing, they have to dress even better, because they have to make a show. People are not only going to concerts to dance or listen to music ... they want to see a show. They want to be entertained.

It is interesting that the director of the *Baconga Orquesta femenina*, from Bogota, commented on this question with the following (personal communication, July 23<sup>rd</sup> 2009):

Con respecto al vestuario precisamente queremos cambiar la imagen de la mujer en la musica tropical ... las orquestas siempre ponen bailarinas casi sin ropa para "vender"...nosotros queremos mostrar otra cosa: mujeres talentosas haciendo buena musica...."vendemos música, no mujeres" como puedes ver en nuestras fotos nos vemos arregladas sin necesidad de mostrar tanta piel.

[Concerning the clothes, we precisely want to change the image of women in the field of tropical music ... The bands always put half-naked dancers on stage to “sell” ... we want to show something different: talented musicians who are playing good music ... “ we are selling music, not women” as you can see on our pictures. We are looking organized, without the necessity of showing so much legs] (own translation, punctuation added by myself to clarify breaks).





**Picture 8: D'Cache**



**Picture 9: horn section of *Baconga Orquesta femenina***

It is a widespread reality that women's sensuality is helping a product's sales. The use of the female body in advertisements is not uniquely exploited to support the sale of a commodity, but also further to educate women on which woman they want to/should be (Winship, 1980: 218). Latin American women are *tropicalized*, a term used by Aparicio & Chávez-Silverman (1997:8), and which means to "imbue a particular space, geography, group, or nation with a set of traits, images, and values" (ibid.). They are represented as exotic, and sexualized in commercials, music videos, and album covers, and by this only visible as stereotypes (Chávez-Silverman, 1997: 101). Those stereotyped sex-role messages that are offered thus influence women's image of themselves. As Judith Williamson says:

Instead of being identified by what they produce, people are made to identify themselves with what they consume. (cited in Winship, 1997: 217)

Through *tropicalization*, Latin American women become a homogenized, fixed category, where ethnic, as well as cultural differences are neglected in order to sell "the Latin American woman" as a sexual commodity. It is noteworthy, that Latin American all-women Salsa bands take advantage of this eroticized image to promote their music. They are fully conscious of the fact that an all-women band is attracting the attention faster, than a regular, mixed band. Even if the *Baconga Orquesta femenina* is not exclusively composed of women, they still keep the addition *femenina* in their band's name.

Me faltó contarte que con respecto al nombre "Baconga orquesta femenina" si buscamos un poco llamar la atención...pero te cuento que estamos en un punto que se está haciendo muy difícil continuar con el proyecto femenino, incluso hemos pensado traer hombres y mantener las voces femeninas. (Maria, personal communication, July 24<sup>th</sup> 2009)

[I need to tell you that, concerning the name "Baconga orquesta femenina"; yes, we are searching a bit to attract

attention ... but let me tell you that we are at a point where it becomes very difficult to continue with the all-women project. We were thinking about including men in the band while keeping the female vocalists] (own translation, punctuation added by myself to clarify breaks)

For them the *feminine* is progressively referring to the female vocalists, to which they want to stick to, even if the rest of the band members are men (personal communication on July 23<sup>rd</sup> 2009).

This sounds contradictory to their opinion about dressing too sexy, as they pledged that music was the most important product to sell. It is difficult at this point to judge about decisions taken by all-women bands, and more extensive fieldwork should be done to study this complex situation of female musicians and their representations.

### ***2.3 Female instrumentalists***

As noted earlier, female instrumentalists that are playing in all-men bands are much more rare than female singers, or all-women bands. It is true that an evolution in this area appeared in the last decade, but while studying the top-level Salsa bands around the world, one realizes that it stays a reality that women are excluded.

An explanation for this occurrence is the fact that in Salsa music you have to be hired from someone in order to play in a band (Gourse, 1995: 7). Since bandleaders and managers have been men throughout history, it was a habit to work with the musicians they knew, hence men (ibid.: 12). Even if the male attitude toward female musicians changed, and women are no longer believed to be musically inferior to men, there are still many bandleaders ignoring female musicians.

En Cali los hombres salseros tienen su rosca, entonces ellos arman sus grupos y siempre lo hacen con hombres... (Angie Zabaleta, personal communication on July 26<sup>th</sup> 2009)

[In Cali male Salsa musicians have their closed circle, and therefore always put together their bands with male musicians...] (own translation)

The same occurs in Europe, as May Peters, a Dutch trombone player confirmed during an interview (August 3<sup>rd</sup> 2009)<sup>17</sup>:

Men, don't think immediately about giving you a call [being a female musician] if they need a trombone player. You are not one of the guys. First you have to become friends, and then you are part of their circle. This

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<sup>17</sup> A complete transcription of all the conducted interviews can be found in the appendices section 1.

doesn't have anything to do with machismo here. Networking is the key. Because of those closed male circles it is more difficult for female musicians here in Europe [to enter the professional Salsa bands].

As Anabell Febles Gutierrez (interview on July 30<sup>th</sup> 2009) commented, there exists also a further reason for the lack of female instrumentalists in top bands:

The priorities of women are very different from those of men. It is no problem for a man to make a living from music his whole life. I think women have more priorities in their lives and this is why we might not develop as far in one single thing. This is my experience.

Considering the prominence of female vocalists, it is even more fascinating that you can, next to female instrumentalists, also hardly find female *Coro* singers<sup>18</sup> performing in a top Salsa band. One of the few exceptions that should be mentioned is Rebeca Zambrana from Puerto Rico, singing *Coro* and playing trumpet in the band of Puerto Rican singer Gilberto Santa Rosa. It is interesting to observe that she is in general presented in his band as one of the guys, and not as an *exotic extra*<sup>19</sup>.



**Picture 10: *Coro* singers of Gilberto Santa Rosa**

As confirmed by many musicians, nowadays there exist many mixed Salsa bands, but they are normally not circulating amongst the top groups. There are various reasons for the ongoing exclusion of female Salsa musicians in high-level bands, which will be elaborated in the following section of this research.

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<sup>18</sup> *Coro* is the Spanish word for choir, which is singing during the improvisation section of a Salsa arrangement in turns with the lead vocalist.

<sup>19</sup> Video example 10 shows Rebeca Zambrana playing a trumpet solo.

### 2.3.1 Gendered instruments

First, there is an extensive range of studies analyzing the gender-stereotypes of musical instruments. Hallam (2008) conducted a research among British school children aged between five and nineteen years, where she studied which instruments are the most gendered, and illustrates some of the possible reasons for those differentiations. According to her findings, girls' (and women's too) choice for an instrument depends on such factors as the shape or size of an instrument, its pitch and sound quality, and the physical characteristics necessary to play the particular instrument (Hallam, 2008: 7). In accordance with her results, girls are more probable to play small and higher pitched instruments, as example the flute, which is one of the most gendered musical instruments.

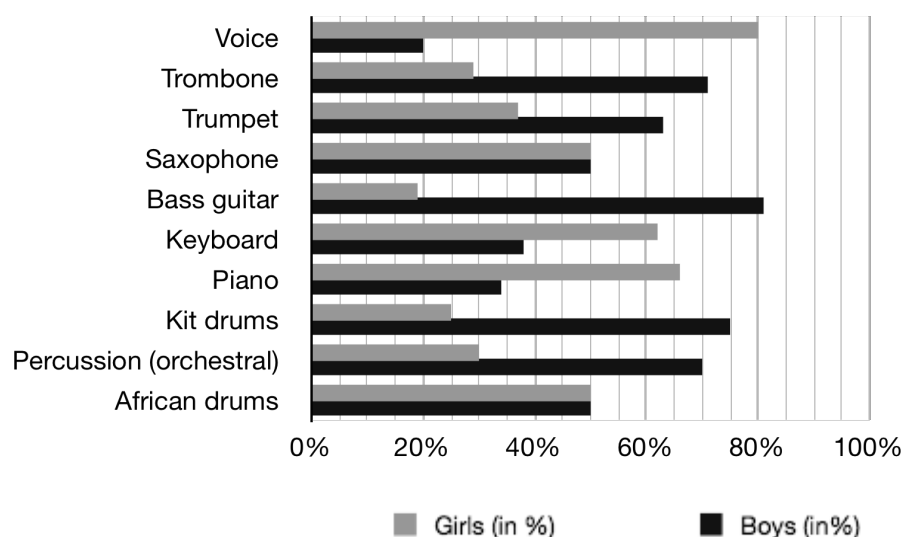
Taking into account the instruments employed in Salsa music, it is not surprising that most of the musicians are men, since boys in general favor brass instruments and the bass guitar. Interestingly, musicians themselves define musical instruments as gendered. May Peters (interview on August 3<sup>rd</sup> 2009) told me that

(...) the trombone (...) is for them [Puerto Ricans] a sort of gun ... an aggressive instrument. (...) It is the most macho instrument for them; even more than the trumpet. This is what I was told. I didn't know that.

As Gourse writes in her study about the jazz scene, female horn players experienced insults, or were even occasional physically attacked. It was unacceptable for men to see a woman blowing an instrument, which led to comments such as "I hate to see a woman do that" (Gourse, 1995: 8)

While today brass and woodwinds instruments are still extremely gendered, the saxophone is gender neutral. Amongst the various percussion instruments, there is a clear dominance of boys playing the Kit drums, whereas African drums are gender neutral.

**Chart 1: Gendered Instruments** (Hallam, 2008: 11-13)



Those numbers are conforming to traditional views on gender and practice of music instruments. As mentioned in chapter 1, Nicholas Cook wrote that practically all of Jane Austen's female characters played the piano (1998: 106). This female preference for the piano, or keyboard is still ongoing today, as the research of Hallam (2008) proves.

Eklund Koza (1991) is noticing a comparable fact while examining the role of women in music as described in *Godey's Lady's Book*, popular in the nineteenth century. At that period, keyboard instruments were the most prominent among women, while men preferred instruments of the orchestral woodwind and string families such as violin and flute. The book does not mention any female musicians in connection with percussion or woodwind instruments (1991: 107).

As Zervoudakes and Tanur (1994, cited in Hallam, 2008: 9) remarked, a change in girls' choice for instruments between 1959 and 1990 can be noticed, and one realizes that girls are gradually opting for both, 'feminine' and 'masculine' instruments.

It is important for girls or women to have role models. As Bruce & Kemp (1993, cited in Hallam, 2008: 9) found out, girls are more probable to choose a 'masculine' instrument if there are other female musicians playing that same musical instrument. This phenomenon has also been confirmed by Maite Hontelé, a Dutch trumpet player:

Well, girls find it in general nice to see that there is a woman who gives the lesson. Then they see that it is possible for a girl to play the trumpet. What I do while teaching is to support the girls in their choice to play the trumpet. (Interview on July 6<sup>th</sup> 2009)

She had two role models herself, from whom she could receive the confirmation that it is possible for women to play the trumpet successfully (interview on July 6<sup>th</sup> 2009). May Peters, while teaching at the Puerto Rican conservatory was interestingly not only a role model for girls but also for her male students.

They [the male students] also tell me: wow, I think you are so great, Maestra! They even tell me that they would enjoy having a mother like me. This is for me the reason to be there; being a role model. (interview on August 3<sup>rd</sup> 2009)

A further influence is the social environment. Especially during the adolescence, peers have an enormous influence and one runs the risk of standing under enormous pressure if one is opting for 'the wrong' instrument (Hallam, 2008: 14). Again, the same occurred in the case of Maite Hontelé who found it extremely important in the early stages of her musical experience that female friends of hers played the trumpet as well (interview on July 6<sup>th</sup> 2009).

If, on the one side female musicians are slowly accepted playing 'masculine' instruments, on the other side one is still making differentiations in performance practices of women. The most apparent example is the one of female percussion players. Waxer states that, while men are playing the congas or bongos (both Afro-Caribbean percussion instruments used in Salsa, next to the timbales) mainly being

seated, women are expected to play them standing up, since it is considered “unlady-like for a woman to be seated with her legs spread around a percussion instrument” (2001: 242).

She further mentions the female keyboardists, who also play standing up. The reason for this, according to Waxer, is the expectation that women show legs and dance while performing (2001: 242).

Having a look at Salsa bands with male musicians, one can however observe a general trend towards playing the keyboard as well as the congas standing up. I think, and experienced it myself while playing the congas, that musicians prefer playing standing up in order to feel more liberated to move with the groove.

Interestingly enough the same is not applicable for bongo players, where you see among male musicians a tendency towards playing the bongo seated, and only standing up during the *Montuno* and *Mambo* section of an arrangement, in which they play the Mambo bell.



**Picture 11: Jose Lugo, pianist of Gilberto Santa Rosa**



**Picture 12: from left: George Delgado, Luisito Quintero, and Jorge Gonzalez**

### 2.3.2 Difference in sound and force

The question whether female musicians sound different than men (or not) is intriguing. There must be some technical explanations for the fact that a girl is less tempted to play brass instruments and rather chooses the piano or a wind instrument such as the flute instead .

According to Waxer (2001: 232), there is no difference between male or female Salsa bands, except for the higher pitch of the female vocalists' voices. However, during her research, she realized that many observers criticized all-women bands of sounding 'bad' and lacking the necessary force for playing Salsa (ibid.: 232). She concluded that the weakness of some bands resulted from inexperienced players that did not have enough musical education. This, according to Waxer, is however a phenomenon that can as well be witnessed among male bands and is consequently not based on gender traits (ibid.: 232).

Playing with force though is an important feature of the rough Salsa dura. Because of the believe that women are incapable of playing as powerful as men, female musicians were throughout history excluded from this aggressive musical style and related instead to the softer romantic Salsa. Waxer (2001: 245) proposes that the smoother sound was more acceptable for female musicians from a male point of view. There is still an ongoing discussion among musicians about this topic.

During the conversation with Maite Hontelé, this subject was addressed, and she defended female trumpet players by stating that there are no disadvantages for women:

Well, I think that men might have bigger lungs, but in the end however it depends on how you use the air. Even people with asthma can play the trumpet.

However, she also stated that men can endure more pain while playing:

They don't worry as much about hurting their lips while playing high and loud notes. By contrast I always take care of and want to protect my lips. (interview on July 6<sup>th</sup> 2009)

Alberto Caicedo (personal communication on July 15<sup>th</sup> 2009), on the other hand, sees physical differences between men and women. "A conguera [female conga player] will never sound as powerful as a conguero [male conga player]". Furthermore he argues:

Even if the musical knowledge of women can be broader than the one of men, there will always remain a difference in power.

A band such as Son de Cali [one of the top Salsa bands of Colombia at that moment] for example is really powerful, and plays long concerts. Men are physically more resistant and able to play the whole night. And especially if the horn arrangements are really high, women have much more problems to endure. Of course,

this doesn't mean that there are no exceptions. Plus there are also many weak male musicians.

Considering the distinct opinions, especially on female horn players, it is remarkable to observe that in Cali's all-women bands it is no exception to include male horn players as only men to the band. *D'Cache* has a male trumpet player and in the new band *Pura Calle* one male trumpet and trombone player enforce the female band. The first *orquesta femenina*, *Son de Azucar*, started by replacing the horn section with synthesizers before they included trombones later on (Waxer, 2001: 237).

### 2.3.3 Acceptance

Being part of a music scene still dominated by men, female musicians in general, (but even more specifically instrumentalists) have to prove continually that they are not inferior to men, and through their actions fight for the disappearance of gender barriers. As Kat Parra stated in an online discussion (Yahoo, Latin Jazz discussion group, 2009): "it's as though the perception is that we are not as serious about our craft as the men in this genre".

Nowadays musicians should be hired independently of their sex. As Pianist Junior Mance (cited in Gourse, 1995: 9) reported about trombonist Melba Liston, who was hired by such respected jazz musicians such as Count Basie or Dizzy Gillespie not because she was one of the best female jazz musicians, but because she was one of the best jazz musicians.

One can justify the hostile behavior towards female instrumentalists with the original masculine character of Salsa music. As Bayton (2006: 353) mentions, it is only possible to establish masculinity by the disassociation of everything feminine. By accepting female musicians in a Salsa dura band, the bandleader takes the risk of losing the credibility of an aggressive and rough Salsa band.

If a female musician reaches the point of being fully accepted among fellow male musicians, she will be treated as one of them, and even be addressed to as 'hey man' or be part of the 'guys'.<sup>20</sup>

While talking to various musicians I became aware of the fact that they differentiate between reactions of the untrained audience and the fellow musicians.

Maite Hontelé (interview on July 6<sup>th</sup> 2009) states that she did not have any problems with winning the respect amongst fellow musicians.

If they see that you are passionate about what you are doing, then they like it. In a band such as the Cubop City Big Band [one of the top Latin Big Bands in the Netherlands] (...) I am just "One of the gang"...

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<sup>20</sup> I experienced this myself on many occasions, that people just don't recognize you any longer as a woman, and thus, while referring to the band, talk about 'the guys'.



She feels that, while being a female trumpet player is no longer an issue among musicians, it still remains a curiosity for the untrained audience (interview on July 6<sup>th</sup> 2009).

May Peters has a similar opinion on this subject. She agrees that female musicians are not at all an issue anymore in top Caribbean bands, but that less educated boys and men still not recognize a woman as an equal musician. “For precisely those machistas, the sharing and playing together is a big difficulty “ (interview on August 3<sup>rd</sup>).

The struggles for recognition of female instrumentalists are tough, and successful musicians “are all very strong women. They are not the normal Latinas you meet in the streets, ... walking in high heels and having long hair” (May Peters interview on August 3<sup>rd</sup> 2009). May Peters already realized at an early age that a girl has not the same possibilities as a boy does. She learned her lesson, and kept fighting throughout her whole career to reach her goals (interview on August 3<sup>rd</sup>).

The following quote of Andrea Brachfeld, flutist, bandleader, composer and arranger, is worth citing completely since it illustrates the strong character of a female musician:

I have always maintained a very clear philosophy about my gender in regards to my musical career. I am a musician who happens to be a female. I am not, nor have I ever been, daunted, by the fact that our world is virtually dominated by men. I practice as much as I can to play as well as I can in order to be a successful musician. I have no control over those people who choose to see me as a female first and then a musician. I try to maintain my respect in every situation and give respect to those who are around me. (interview for [www.descarga.com](http://www.descarga.com), 2003)

Gourse (1995), mentions in her book about women in Jazz some interesting methods women used to find work in the music business. According to her, women were successful in the *door-to door method*. She explains that female musicians, who were rejected at one place, did not give up but instead searched for another possibility to perform. They were persistent jobseekers, and found musical work in areas men did not look for (1995: vii). Furthermore, female instrumentalists were not afraid of making what she calls *lateral moves* (1995: 17). To establish themselves as serious musicians, women regularly moved between the various musical styles, and like this, not only made themselves a name and earned their living but also demonstrated their diversity.

Studying female Salsa musicians one can find a similar diversity. Even if Maite Hontelé for example is one of the most asked Latin trumpet players in the Netherlands, she does not stick to Latin American music styles only. During her career she played with Pop and R&B bands, Latin-house DJ's and performed together with a comedian ([www.myspace.com/maitexu](http://www.myspace.com/maitexu)).

The same can be observed among internationally renowned artists, such as Sheila E. who is a multi-faceted drummer, percussionist, vocalist, songwriter, performer, arranger, producer, and composer. During her long musical career she recorded and

toured with a variety of artists, amongst them Tito Puente, Marvin Gaye, Prince, Lionel Richie, to name just a few (www.sheilae.com).

One can conclude that female musicians are much more respected as equal ‘sidemen’ in bands nowadays . Ralph Irizarry, an internationally acclaimed top timbales player, says that while he is playing with a woman, she is just another musician to him (Latin Jazz Yahoo discussion group, August 15th 2009). The same counts for the promoters of Salsa music, as Nelson Rodriguez affirmed (personal communication on August 16<sup>th</sup> 2009). According to his experiences only fans do still point out female musicians in a band.

However, female bandleaders still clearly struggle for recognition as a current discussion on the well-known Latin-jazz Internet discussion group shows (<http://launch.groups.yahoo.com/group/latinjazz/>, 2009).

Well-known Latin Jazz musicians, living in the United States, are discussing whether or not it is necessary for them to produce a *Women in Latin Jazz Festival*.<sup>21</sup> The question was raised after female bandleaders were completely overlooked during this year’s *San José Jazz Festival*, even if there is a multitude of high-level female bandleaders present in the Bay Area.

While some artists are clearly in favor of such an event, comparable to those who are supporting the creation of all-women bands, one has to be conscious about the risk of segregation while aiming for a separation of female and masculine bands and festivals. The intention of Annette Aguilar, who is planning such a *women-only* festival, is not to separate both male and female musicians from each other, but rather to educate people about female musicians with the aid of such an event (Latin Jazz Yahoo discussion group, August 16th 2009). Throughout her career she herself received support of great male musicians such as Ray Barretto and Jerry Gonzales. According to Nina Olson, Director of External Affairs of the *Raices Latin Music Museum* in New York, there are still many who refuse to acknowledge women’s contributions to Latin music. While she is trying hard to organize a program on women in Latin music she comes into conflict with people who believe that there “are more important stories that need to be told” (personal communication on August 19th 2009).

## ***2.4 The producer***

In all the cases discussed above, a really influential party has been neglected until this point: the role of the *male* producer.

Negus (cited in Mayhew, 2004: 149), defines the producer as the one “making the key decisions about how specific material should be recorded in a studio and supervising the sessions”. In a period, where studio productions are seen as the key to success, the producer becomes the central figure in an artist’s career. It is therefore even more surprising, that female producers are almost completely absent, and that female musicians are in general dependent on male decisions. There exist only some rare

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<sup>21</sup> This would not be a novelty though since there existed a *Women in Latin Jazz Festival* in Boston, which was held between 2003 and 2006. Unfortunately I lack further information because the festival ceased to exist.

exceptions, such as for example the Cuban singer, composer, and arranger *Albita*, who counts among the few female artists that produce their records themselves. Albita founded her own label, called *Angel's Dawn*, in 2004 under which she released her Grammy-winning album *Albita llegó* ([www.albitaonline.com](http://www.albitaonline.com)). Whereas one can find her album listed as “best tropical album of the year”, the second award for “best executive producer” is bizarrely not mentioned as a Grammy winner in the official winner’s list. (Here, Emilio Estefan Jr. is listed as the producer.)

Since female producers are rare in the world of Salsa, the male hegemony in the record business is preserved. May Peters is convinced that the tough music business is a man’s world, where female producers are unlikely to succeed. She says that it might be cliché, but according to her experiences it reflects the truth, and men are better in selling artists (interview on August 3<sup>rd</sup> 2009).

In an article entitled *Behind every great woman...*, published in the British music magazine *Q*, Sutcliffe (1996) calls the male producer the “rational father figure and genius”, in contrast to the undisciplined femininity of the performer (cited in Mayhew, 2004: 153). Female artists, by leaving the musical control to their male producers, lose their credibility as “authentic artists” (Mayhew, 2004: 152). Especially singers who are not involved in the writing process of the songs risk to confirm the *macho* prejudice, that women are taking up the unskilled, and *natural* musical position (Mayhew, 2004: 150), which is an argument frequently used to justify women’s underrepresentation in the active music scene in general. As Cook remarked, since only few women were active as composers, men believed that they were “constitutionally or even biologically incapable of [doing] it” (Cook, 1998: 106).

Fascinating in this process is the reality that most of the female artists, or all-women bands agree with the musical and commercial decisions taken by men, and become a commodity constructed according to patriarchal models. Only some rare feminist artists, such as La India, reject this kind of representation, and actively participate in the production process (Aparicio, 2002: 150) by reinventing her image according to her own standards.

One of the possible reasons for this could be that female artists, by fighting with their producers, might jeopardize their collaboration, and consequently also their commercial success. As May Peters was advised in Puerto Rico: don’t fight with your producer! (interview on August 3<sup>rd</sup> 2009).

### 3 The audience and the reception

In order to be able to study the listening behavior of female Salsa consumers, it is necessary to define the word audience first. What is its role in music? Why do we have to take the listeners and their practices into consideration while analyzing a popular musical style such as Salsa?

#### 3.1 Definition of the term

Dictionaries define the term audience, which can be derived from the Latin verb *audire*, meaning to hear, as

the spectators or listeners assembled at a performance, for example, or attracted by a radio or television program. (The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language)

Nevertheless, one has to ask oneself if it is still acceptable to presume that an audience is a mere mass of passive consumers (Adorno's critique on popular music's audience, 1941), receptive to cultural messages offered to them through music. Fiske demands the recognition of the passive text, which can only be activated through the social process of consumption by an active audience (Fiske, 1988:248).

Unfortunately, it was common in popular music studies to simply concentrate on the messages of the songs and ignore the role of the audience. Frances Aparicio criticizes the scholars who silenced popular music's listeners by imposing their 'correct' interpretations on them (1998: 188). According to her, it is impossible to gain winning information about listening practices while ignoring the multiple voices of those who consume music and assign their meaning to it.

There exist a variety of receptions and perceptions among the audience, and Angus (cited in Cruz & Lewis 1994: 15) opts for "the [audience's] right to move from being listeners to being speakers." Consumption becomes an active process, where the audience represents an important contributor. For Fiske (cited in Aparicio, 1994: 666), popular culture is a *praxis*, where the audience, instead of being the consumer, is the "cultural producer." Ola Stockfelt takes it a step further by declaring the listener as the "composer of the music" (cited in Finnegan, 2003: 184).

Since the audience of Salsa music is no homogeneous crowd, the connected meaning also varies along personal experiences. The popular texts are, according to Fiske, *polysemic* (Fiske, cited in Aparicio, 1994:666).

As Ian Cross writes:

music's meaning appears intimately bound to the context in which it is experienced. (Cross, 2009:3)

The meaning of a song, parallel to musical taste, does not, however, only correlate with class cultures and subcultures, but is further also linked to specific age groups (Frith, 1996:120). Those connections between musical taste, generations and ethnic groups will be discussed in detail in chapter 4.

Consequently, we can conclude that in order to correctly understand the complex listening behavior of Salsa's audience, one should not only analyze the message that is offered to us through the lyrics, but also the audience and the flexible meanings they construct. Hawkes (cited in Lewis, 1994: 23) states that

the true nature of things may be said to lie not in things themselves, but in the relationships we construct, and then perceive, between them.

It is the audience that, through its "active cultural praxis of listening and rewriting" (Aparicio, 1998: 210), defines the value of popular music and not, as so often presumed, the music industry or the media (ibid.) For Hall (1980: 128), meaning, which just exists if there is consumption, can be effective through practical application only. Popular music, such as Salsa, is thus meaningless without the consumption of the active listener. This is also the reason why the audience combined with its listening practices should be included in the study of such styles of music.

### ***3.2 Listening situations***

Nowadays, finding silence is a difficult task, and music is without a doubt the soundtrack of our lives. All kinds of musical styles surround us at any moment of the day. One can even say that one feels offended by other people's music that is invading our private space (Frith, 2004: 33). Today, we do not uniquely listen to the music we choose to hear anymore, but mainly to others' music (which we normally do not like, and therefore tend to call *bad* music).

Frith claims that people do feel less upset by live music in public spaces than by the canned, mostly easy-listening music we are confronted with involuntarily (2003: 94). This is due to the fact that live music is a social experience, and that its main function is that of accompanying traditional rituals and social events (Frith, 2003: 98). Canned music on the contrary has lost all connection with its social origins.

To differentiate the variety of perceived sounds, one has to create the ability of translating and using the sound impressions in specific ways (Stockfelt, 2004: 89). According to Stockfelt, with the help of this competence, one cannot only distinguish between musical styles, but one can also apply several modes of listening to the perceived music (ibid.). There exist multiple ways of listening to a specific musical genre, and listeners are able to choose which mode to apply according to the situation. In his article, Stockfelt elaborates the *genre-normative listening situations*, which represent the ideal connection between music and listener for one musical style (2004: 91). For each genre, there exists a number of such *genre-normative listening situations*. They are flexible and

have changed over time in relationship corresponding to styles of music, to choices of strategies of the listener, to the genre-normative situations of listening, and to a series of social factors. (Stockfelt, 2004: 91)

The author further talks about *adequate listening* if one is listening according to the *situation-associated genre-normative mode of listening* (ibid.). Again, there is not

only one correct way of *adequate listening*, since one specific situation can cause various adequate attitudes toward one genre.

During her research, Aparicio became aware of the fact that Latin American Salsa listeners differentiate between two modes of Salsa listening: the first being dancing to music, and the second, the attentive listening to a song (Aparicio, 1998: 201). Both ways of listening to Salsa are adequate for this genre.

At the end of his article, Stockfelt claims that there is not one “better, more musical, more intellectual, or one culturally superior way of listening” (2004: 91). As Frith realized, on the other hand, critics as well as most fans usually tend to believe that “greater [musical] knowledge and better taste (...) mean[s] a superior way of listening” (2004: 34).

Being able to listen adequately signifies to understand what is relevant for the genre in one particular context (ibid.).

Such adequacy is not determined by the music style in and of itself, or by the genre within which the music style was created, or by the genre to which it primarily belongs today, but rather by the location on the music in the specific situation. (Stockfelt, 2004: 92)

### ***3.3 Listeners’ musical judgments***

“*This song is bad. Please turn it down!*” Such comments are not unusual to hear. However, how is it possible to judge music?

As Frith argues, music became “a key to identity” (1996: 110). This argument is relevant for understanding the reasons for musical judgments since music listeners are continually trying to create boundaries between them and fans of other styles through criticizing their musical choices.

Hall’s statement that identification is always based on the exclusion of something else and the establishment of a violent hierarchy between the two extremes (1996: 5) can thus also be applied to music fans. By defining us with one specific musical style, we consequently think of that music as *good*, contrary to the *bad* music of others.

Music supplies a human resource through which people can “enact their lives with inextricably entwined feeling, thought and imagination” (Finnegan, 2003: 188). We use music to define relationships between us and a specific place, society, and history, and to create a feeling of community amongst other fans. Music, and especially music making, is about enjoying being together in a group of people holding some common origins or shared experiences (Frith, 2003: 100).

Good music is the authentic expression of something - a person, an idea, a feeling, a shared experience, a Zeitgeist. (Frith, 1987: 136)

Talking about Salsa music, various academics suggest that this genre became the symbol of Puerto Rican identity (Pacini Hernandez 2003; Manuel 1994; Duany 2000;

Matosantos 1996), with whose help they define themselves in disagreement with the Americans. By defining who they are through their music, they could resist the foreign culture of the United States.

Through our self-identification with various musical styles, we claim being experts in this genre and consequently being able to judge what is good (Washburne & Derno, 2004: 3).

Frith (2004) explains two kinds of musical judgments: production and effect judgments. For the first category, one has to possess some musical knowledge in order to be able to condemn the production of a record (2004: 22). Fans are talking about *bad* music if musical clichés are employed and if a song closely follows a standard formula, therefore leaving no space for unpredictability (ibid.). This argument is closely related to Adorno's critique on popular music and to the historical presumption that all mass-produced music should be identified as low and bad and in contrast to unique 'art' music (Washburne & Derno, 2004: 3).

Considering the reality that most of those commercial productions are consumed and valued by multitudes, it is fascinating that most scholars even used to support the low/art music dichotomy by ignoring popular music genres and treating them as 'unworthy' of study (Washburne & Derno, 2004: 4).

An example of one of the most cited effect judgments is that music and its performance can cause bad things. The most commonly discussed topic of such performances is the video clips that are filled with sexist and racist allusions (Frith, 2004: 25). In the following section (4.2.1 about Salsa dance), this topic will be described in depth since it is a common critique on erotized Salsa music performances.

Effect judgments are generally uttered by listeners who do not belong to the musical environment in question and consequently lack the understanding and knowledge of that music (Frith, 2004: 24).

Bad music is a subjective category, but it is also marked by particular cultural and historical contestations over what is thought to be good and bad within a variety of differing contexts. (Washburne & Derno, 2004: 5)

Aparicio (1998: 200) realized that musical judgments also exist among the listeners of Salsa music. In particular, male fans construct separations between *good* and *bad* Salsa. For them, *good* Salsa music must include political messages, such as the socio-political music of the Panamanian Ruben Blades. In the first place, these records are not meant for dancing, but for listening to the message by concentrating on the lyrics (Aparicio, 1998: 201). The huge amount of commercial dance music is for these fans an example of *bad* music. The lyrics of such songs are weakened by the listening situation and not considered relevant. It is noteworthy that the male listeners interviewed by Aparicio linked their musical judgments to the various adequate listening situations of Salsa, whereas female research participants' dichotomies are constructed by class and race identities (1998: 201). She became aware of the fact that among female Latin American Salsa listeners, there exist "separate interpretive communities" (ibid.: 203). As she concluded:

What working-class Latinas “do” with Salsa music seems to be much more active engagement, with more social significance, compared to their upper-class counterparts. (Aparicio, 1998: 203)

Upper-class women did not tend to mention all-black and all-male bands among their favorites. Interviewees with a working-class background on the other hand mentioned artists such as Ruben Blades or El Gran Combo de Puerto Rico and claimed that they identified themselves with Salsa music (ibid.: 199). One realizes a distinction in meaning and judgments among women with different class origins.

The female listening behavior will be the theme of the next chapter, where musical meanings and experiences of women will be analyzed in detail.

## 4 Listening as a woman

This chapter will analyze what Aparicio calls *listening as a woman* (Aparicio 1994: 660). Taking into consideration the hypermasculine character of Salsa music with its multitude of sexist lyrics and its *macho* artists, how is it possible that women love this music so much? The Salsa industry constructs women according to patriarchal norms. As an outsider,<sup>22</sup> one wonders why Latin American women, as well as female Salsa fans from different origins, do not publicly fight against this sexist attitude and continue dancing to and singing along with those songs.

This chapter will offer some answers to this controversy by examining the listening behavior of women, which will be explained in part with the help of the results of my online survey.

### 4.1 Female meanings

According to Frances Aparicio, who did research on this topic, the lyrics of a Salsa tune are less significant for Salsa fandom than one could have imagined. It is mainly the ‘Western’ feminist that is concerned about the phallogocentric representations of women in lyrics and music videos. Latin American women in general consider Salsa as part of their culture and therefore feel more different about it than outsiders.

The first step for understanding what Salsa means to women is to define what the term ‘popular culture’ means. A capitalist commodity is only a part of popular culture if it represents the interests of the people. Culture is an active process, a praxis, that can only grow from within; from the people and not the industry (Fiske, 1989: 23). If a musical style is popular, it is consequently relevant to the social state of the people (ibid.: 25). Since popular culture is fluid and crosses all social categories of class, gender, age and race, there exists no fixed single meaning (ibid.:30). While listening to Salsa music, the audience creates meanings that make sense in its momentary

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<sup>22</sup> I call an ‘outsider’ here anyone who did not grow up in a Latin American environment where Salsa music is omnipresent.



situation. It uses the music for its own purposes, which Fiske (1989: 36) calls the “art of being in between [production and consumption].”

The most valuable theory for the comprehension of the plural meanings is Fiske’s theory of *productive pleasure*, which includes the pleasure of producing meanings. As he says,

pleasure results from [a] mix of productivity, relevance, and functionality, which is to say that the meanings I make from a text are pleasurable when I feel that they are my meanings and that they are relevant to my everyday life in a practical, direct way. (Fiske, 1989: 53)

The fact that consumption thus becomes a process of active production is important for the female reception of Salsa music. Instead of simply accepting the sexist construction of the female body, women, while listening to such songs, constantly *reread and reconstruct their own sexual identities and relationships with males against the misogynistic grain* (Aparicio, 1994: 667).

As noted already in chapter 3, the audience is playing the most important role in popular culture since music would be meaningless without its interpretations. Traditional patriarchal Salsa music must thus be appreciated in its relation to the cultural and social contexts of the Latin American society (Aparicio, 1994: 663) and cannot be understood by only considering lyrics.

In my survey, I gave an example of violent lyrics directed against women. It was an extract from the song *Bandolera* from Hector Lavoe (from the album *Comedia* released in 1977, Fania).

Pau, pau, pau,  
te voy a dar  
te voy a dar una pela.  
Si te tiro por la ventana  
te subes por la escalera.

Pau, pau, pau,  
I will give you  
I will give you a punishment.  
If I throw you out of the window  
I will lift you via the stairs.

Ay vete, vete paquetera.  
Me buscaste los bolsillos  
me tumbaste la cartera.  
Y esa va a ser la razon.  
porque te voy a pegar.  
Y caeras sobre la arena.  
Anda y vete ya mi amor.  
Si no te quiero sigue tranquila.  
No perturbes mas mi vida.  
O te vo'a morder la oreja.

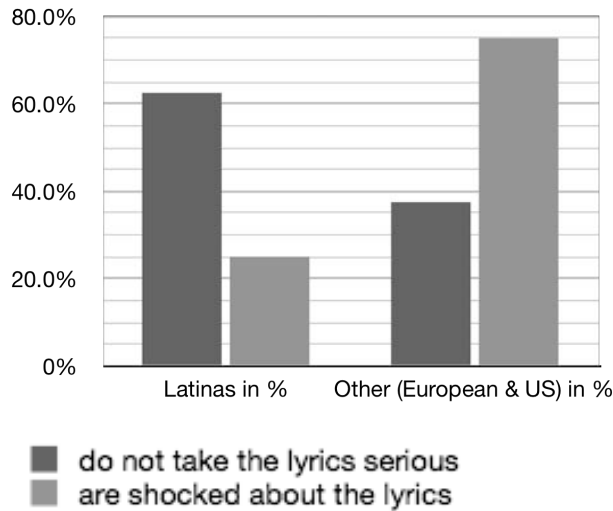
Look at you, liar  
You were searching my pockets  
And stole my wallet.  
This will be the reason why  
I will punish you.  
You will fall in the sand  
Go away now, my love,  
If I don’t love you, you continue quietly  
You don’t bother anymore my life.  
Or I will bite your ear off (own free translation)

Thirty-nine percent of the participants replied to the question as to what they feel when reading those lyrics, and they said they do not take them seriously. Also, 19,5% answered that they were shocked about the lyrics.

If we consider chart 2, we realize that Latin American women (including Colombians, Venezuelans, Peruvians, and Nuyoricans) do not take the song lyrics seriously, whereas European and North American women (including Spanish, Polish, Luxembourgish) were clearly more shocked about the violent content of this song than the Latin American participants.

In contrast to Aparicio's study (1998), which only focused on Latin American women, my survey included 44% Latin American women and 56% women with European and North American origins. Of all the participants, 41,5% replied that they grew up with Salsa music.

**Chart 2: Reactions to sexist lyrics**



This result supports Aparicio's conclusion by emphasizing the difference in pleasures and meanings due to social differences. As she realized in her comparison of working- and upper-class Latinas, young upper-class Latinas reject Salsa dura songs due to their sexist implications. Contrary to them, working-class women do not reject such songs, but instead select the various aspects of the lyrics that are relevant to them. They

deconstructed - and inverted - the sexual roles and masculine constructions of the feminine that were articulated in these Salsa texts. (...) [They create their own meanings] from a popular text and, furthermore, produce a reading that oppos[es] the ideology of the song. (Aparicio, 1994: 668)

For Aparicio, this listening behavior is a clear example of productive pleasure. One can compare the non-Latin American women of my survey with those young upper-class Latinas of Aparicio's research (1998) since both categories of women did not in general grow up with Salsa music and do not consider this music genre as a cultural marker the way the working-class Latinas of Aparicio's study do.

Besides being a tool for remembering and constructing one's own identity (DeNora, 2006:141), music can furthermore create a sense of collective memory and identity (Whiteley, Bennett & Hawkins, 2004: 4). Salsa music, as popular music in general, can be used as *aide-mémoire* (litt.: to aid memory) (DeNora, 2006: 144). Through the repetition of a song heard in the past, we can relive this specific moment and experience it again. Music makes past events alive again (ibid.). Music is not only recalling special moments of our life, but also memories of people or feelings.

It is fascinating that most of the working-class women interviewed by Aparicio traced their first memories of Salsa to their mothers (1998: 201). The reason for this is, according to the author, the reality that it is a mother's role to pass on cultural and national traditions to the children (ibid.: 202). Salsa, while being patriarchal musical style, functioned furthermore as a sort of escape for Latin American women (mothers). As Aparicio (1998: 197) mentions, Salsa gave such women the chance to "negotiate power differentials with the men in their lives." They learn about "decoding male signifiers and sexual puns in the fictive space of music [and use it for] the decoding of male (sexual/romantic) language in real life" (Aparicio, 1994: 667). The behavior of those women is a further clear example of productive pleasure.

Remembering one's mother dancing in the kitchen to Salsa music surely marks a person and strengthens one's link to Salsa. For those who did not grow up in such an environment, it becomes hard to experience Salsa as a tool for self-identification. They do not necessarily experience Salsa as something of their own. For the latter, Salsa remains a commodity and does not represent a cultural expression.

According to Steven Frith (1996:120), we cannot ignore that musical taste is connected to ethnicity, class and age groups. Even among Latin American women, there exist differences in taste. Whereas the older generations normally prefer Salsa dura with its rough sound, reflecting the struggles of the immigrants in the new urban environment of New York, younger Latin Americans generally listen more to Salsa romantica, which came up in the late 1980s and 1990s.

The new generations of Latin Americans living in the United States belong mainly to an English-speaking middle class and associate the Salsa (dura) of their parents with lower-class values (Manuel, 1991: 109). Salsa dura is seen as the music of the poor immigrants and was mainly performed by black or *mulato* musicians (Aparicio, 1998: 81). Quite often, modern generations do not want to be associated with their own Latin American traditions and the social status linked to those, in the hope of achieving a better social rank (Sanchez Gonzalez, 1999: 246).

When Salsa romantica came up with its tight connections to North American Pop music, the young Latin American immigrants could identify with this style and claim it their own. Since identity is a process of experiences (Frith, 1996: 111), and since the experiences of the new generations vary from the ones of their parents, young Latin Americans in the United States identify themselves as other people and consequently with a different, more whitened-up kind of music.

#### ***4.2 Female listening situations of Salsa music***

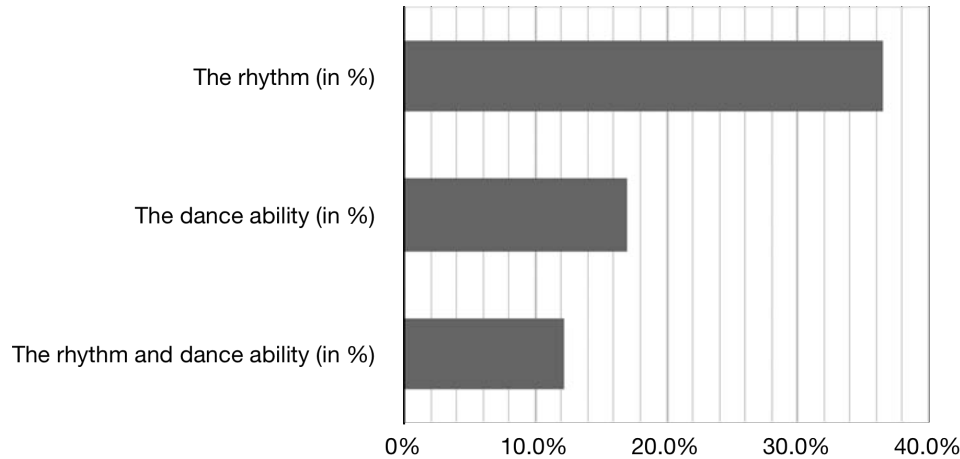
As already mentioned earlier, lyrics in Salsa music are much more irrelevant than often presumed.

If one is bearing in mind Salsa's two adequate listening behaviors, one realizes that Salsa is in the first place enjoyed because it is danceable. Manuel (1998: 14) writes that most Caribbean popular music is primarily dance music, where lyrics are rendered secondarily, in comparison to other musical elements such as rhythm.

One of his students concludes that she likes the music "because of how it sounds, not because [she] agree[s] with the message it sends" (ibid.). This statement is especially important for our analysis of female ways of listening to Salsa. It shows us that the messages of a song are maybe of less importance than we always assumed.

This is also the reason why you can see women on the dance floor, even if the band or the DJ is playing a song with sexist lyrics. For most women, dancing is one of the most important features of this musical style. They enjoy the pleasures of the music (the rhythm and melodies) without engaging in a discourse about the patriarchal topics of the songs.

**Chart 3: The most important features of Salsa music**



As you can see in this chart, almost 66% of the participants of the online survey consider both Salsa’s rhythm and its dance ability as the most significant element of Salsa music. Interestingly, of those women, 59% were non-Latin Americans. This means, thus, that Latin American women do not only consider the dance ability as important, but are also concerned about other musical elements, such as the melodies, the lyrics, and the socio-political message of Salsa music.

I consider the rhythm also important for dancing since it is the beat that makes our bodies move to the music. Finnegan (2003: 191) concludes that we have to admit that

sound resonates in the body, and that the experience of music includes its patterned corporal engagements.

Since Salsa music and dance are inseparable from each other and share the same spaces (festivals, night clubs, living rooms), the two terms are used interchangeably many times (Renta, 2004: 141). This close tie becomes obvious in my research, where women acknowledged dance (in combination with rhythm) as the most important element of Salsa, and the importance of dance must therefore not be neglected in a study about Salsa.

#### **4.2.1 Salsa dance**

As Wieschiolek (2003: 115) mentions, “dance, and even single movements, are shaped by culture.” This means that movements result from a specific context and are furthermore only understandable in this context (Wieschiolek, 2003: 116). Understanding the meaning of music or a dance movement is relevant in preventing earlier-mentioned effect judgments such as the idea that music can cause bad things. For an outsider, Salsa dancing can give the impression of a sexist performance since

women follow the men who are leading them. Yolanda (Jolie) Medina (2005) describes her struggles with Salsa dancing as a feminist Salsera. She thought that while letting the man lead her, she would allow patriarchy (2005: 862). However, after a while, she understood that following and leading are both of equal importance while dancing Salsa, and that both activities lead to the creation of the desired move.

Both men and women need to learn and master the skills necessary to create a well-balanced partnership. (2005: 863)

Salsa dancing is thus not uniquely a performance of patriarchy. It is “based on mutuality, partnership, communication, and the sharing of equal strengths at precise moments” (ibid.). In order to become conscious about this communication, however, one has to actively experience Salsa dancing; instead of merely commenting while observing, one has to become a participant.

The next point is the meaning of dancing to Salsa music for Latin Americans as well as for the increasing number of non-Latin Americans. According to Fiske (cited in Renta, 2004: 143-144),

it is the kinesthetic and visual pleasure of the movement in relation to the auditory enjoyment of the music that is among the most significant of motivators aside (although not exclusive) from cultural affirmation.

However, the movements applied in Salsa dance are criticized a lot for being profane and too erotic. It is perceived, in contrast to the white, disciplined and civilized standards, as the dance of a racial “other,” which means undisciplined, wild, and exotic (Medina, 2005: 866). Body movements applied in Salsa dance are very much the opposite of those used in Western dance traditions. Whereas ballet is known for an upright posture, with “its often-linear hierarchal arrangements” (Backstein, 2001: 454), Salsa dance has its origin in African traditions.

With its polycentrism, which implies isolated movements from more than one center of a dancer’s body (Renta, 2004: 145), Salsa movements especially emphasize the lower body. Most Europeans regard the unfamiliar movements of the hips in particular as immoral and too sexual (Wieschiolek, 2003: 123). The movements in combination with the dress codes of Latin clubs (short and sexual dresses) are not in accordance with the moralistic standards.

Wieschiolek (2003) studied the motivation of Germans to learn Salsa dance and found out that, in most cases, the sensual components of Salsa, with its movements and behavior, were the motivation to learn Salsa dancing. Some respondents claimed that Salsa changed their lives, and that now they possess more self-esteem and a better mastering of their bodies (ibid.: 128-130). The breaking of taboos and exercising “traditionally forbidden” moves (Backstein, 2001: 462) can be for non-Latin American dancers liberating. It offers them a new body awareness, which results in a feeling of liveliness and joy of living (Wieschiolek, 2003: 129).

According to Chambers (cited in Aparicio, 1998: 95), Salsa dance must be seen as a moment of looseness, where bodies are allowed to exercise movements responding to the rhythm that are not accepted in the outside world.

Since Salsa music cannot simply be seen as a capitalist commodity, the act of dancing to the sound of this music also has another more complex role than just entertainment. It is a fact that dance is used to affirm culture, and most scholars (Aparicio, 1998, Delgado & Muñoz, 1997, Berrios-Miranda, 2004) agree that dancing to Salsa music is for Latin Americans a kind of escape from the everyday life. As Frith (1987: 142) writes:

The pleasures of dance (...) provide a setting, a society, which seems to be defined only by the time-scale of the music (the beats per minute), which escapes the real time passing outside.

The space of a dance floor is one of freedom, where a reaffirmation of culture can take place without restrictions (Aparicio, 1998: 100). It is through the dancing with other Latin Americans and to the music played by their own musicians (Berrios-Miranda, 2004: 165) that cultural identity and collective memory is constructed. As a popular Venezuelan saying (cited in Berrios-Miranda, 2004: 163) claims: *Y quién me quita lo bailao* (And who can take away what I have danced). Therefore, Salsa is regarded as a source of pride of one's own cultural background.

The element of resistance, pride of one's own cultural traditions and formation of identity in Salsa dance have their roots in the dances of African slaves brought to the Caribbean. Dance was fast recognized as a powerful political resistance against the colonizer. In the case of the Haitian Revolution, for example, dance movements of the Vodun tradition inspired military strategies. Therefore, dance festivities of slaves were held under the strict control of the European slaveholders (Renta, 2004: 141). As the author continues,

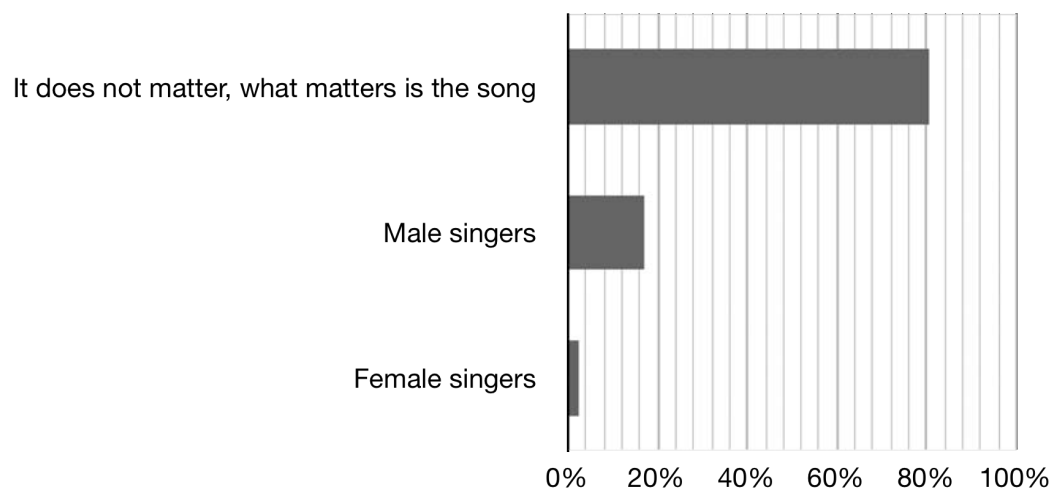
colonialism [brought] with it a physical oppression that included the suppression of Afro-Latin(o/a) dance forms. Historically, Afro-Latin(o/a) dance communities have resisted this form of oppression in part by keeping their dance forms alive, a practice that persists in Latin America, the Caribbean, and the U.S. among Latinos/as. (ibid.)

### 4.3 Which music is popular among women?

This part will study the choices women make while listening to music and what they are precisely listening to. Which musical styles do women prefer, and do they tend to listen more to female artists than male bands? These questions will be answered by the results of my survey.

One could think that women in general tend to listen more to female bands, or female singers, since these women are singing about topics that are connected with their realities. By supporting female artists, a shift in power could be achieved, and women would resist the oppression of the male Salsa business and empower themselves. However, as my research showed, most women do not care if there is a female or male singer performing a song.

**Chart 4: Do you prefer male or female singers?**



This result is fascinating since one could have believed that women were more interested in those female singers that perform, what Aparicio (1998) calls, the *gender war*, by “singing back” (ibid.: 156) to men. An example of such lyrics will be discussed below in more detail.

One can conclude that *Salseras* are thus not as much interested in such a gender war and prefer Salsa for its energetic rhythm and feeling. In contrast, to the question as to whether they would like to see more female musicians playing in Salsa bands, 63,4% answered with yes, while 34% stated that they do not care.

Those contradictory results leave many questions open. Why is the sex of singers not important for the participants of my survey? This is an interesting occurrence if one is considering that Frith (1987: 139) wrote that the listener shows an *emotional alliance with the performers* during a performance or while listening to the records. Women thus tend more to feel a kind of relation towards the male singers, who sing about experiences with women (who in most lyrics left or betrayed them), than to female singers, who are uttering emotions and incidents familiar to their own life. How can this phenomenon be explained?

An important point is the role of the voice. If Frith (1987: 145) is right, and people are responding more to the voice than to the lyrics themselves, is it then possible to assume that a female audience is reacting in a more emotional way to male singers

due to their attraction to the opposite sex? This would at least explain why female Salseras prefer male singers to female ones.

As my survey shows, many different styles are represented among the favorite Salsa artists or bands of women. Next to Salsa music, artists playing Cuban styles such as *Timba* or *Son* were mentioned. Latino pop singer Marc Anthony was mentioned most often as being the favorite artist. Participants of my survey who mentioned Marc Anthony<sup>23</sup> as their favorite artist are both Latin American women, including Peruvians and Colombians, as well as Europeans, such as German, Dutch and Spanish women. Why is it that so many women prefer Marc Anthony's music?

According to Ed Morales, several factors made him one of the most successful Latin singers of today. The most musical element is his wide-ranging tenor voice (2003: 88). With the help of this powerful voice, he creates "Whitney Houston-esque moments of splendor" (ibid.: 89). Due to his earlier R&B experiences, Anthony employs techniques of smooth singing to Salsa music in order to augment his fan base with younger generations of Latin Americans living in the United States and to feel connected to Afro-American styles of music (ibid.: 88). Marc Anthony does not only use his voice as a medium for crossing over, but also recorded two successful English-language albums, as well as songs mixing different Latin American musical traditions. Anthony's music can be called Latin Pop, similar to the style of Ricky Martin. The new, hip image that he created for himself by wearing jeans and t-shirts instead of suits further helped to capture the attention of a younger audience (Washburne, 2008: 91).

Both strategies make it possible for him to be promoted as "a major entertainment figure transcending his Salsa niche" (Morales, 2003: 89). This leads to a very diverse fan base. This year, Anthony was honored with the CHCI Chair's Lifetime Achievement Award, which is presented to a person who has committed his career to the improvement of Latin Americans' lives. According to the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI),

Marc Anthony will be honored not only for his landmark achievements as an entertainer, but most importantly for bringing Latin music and culture into the mainstream and bringing honor and pride to the Hispanic American community. (www.chci.org, 2009)

Marc Anthony can be seen as one of the most media-present Latin Americans at the moment. The fact that he is married to Jennifer Lopez, herself a Latina icon, for sure helped to promote his success in the mainstream music business. An extramusical sexualized image is useful for marketing strategies, where musical merits are often neglected (Washburne, 2008: 186). Marc Anthony's presence in everyday life worldwide and the mainstream media (and not only Latin American-focused media) could be the explanation for his global success.

It is remarkable that Celia Cruz was mentioned second most frequently (next to the Colombian Salsa band *Grupo Niche*, the Cuban singer Isaac Delgado and the Puerto Rican Salsa singer Gilberto Santa Rosa), just behind Marc Anthony as most-named

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<sup>23</sup> The reader is invited to have a look at video example 11.



favorite artist. The Queen of Salsa is thus clearly highly prized by female Salseras, although not mentioned at position one.

In general, my survey results illuminate the fact that the questioned *Salseras* prefer Salsa dura artists, such as Ruben Blades, the Gran Combo de Puerto Rico, or the above-mentioned Celia Cruz over Salsa romantica singers such as Gilberto Santa Rosa, La India, or Tito Nieves. A total of 32,9% of the bands that were cited were artists playing Salsa dura, and only 18,3% were of the Salsa romantica style.

Those numbers are underlined by the outcome of the question as to which Salsa style the female listener favored. From the outcome, it became clear that women who were polled like Salsa dura (36,6%) better than Salsa romantica (12,2%).

Furthermore, it is interesting to see that women replied that they do listen to all-women bands (34%), but nevertheless did not mention them as their favorite bands. What was most fascinating about this result was, however, the fact that among those Salseras that listen to all-women bands, 71,5% were non-Latin Americans (Spanish, Dutch, French, and Americans), and only 28,5% were Latin American women (Colombians, Venezuelans and Peruvians).

These results lead to the question as to whether or not 'Western' women are more feminist than Latin Americans, and therefore are more likely to listen to female musicians. This outcome is interesting since such bands are almost rarely promoted in Europe, and that over here all-women bands are present mainly at the local level.

The findings about the preference of Salsa dura over Salsa romantica are interesting since there is the general belief that women listen more to the romantic (feminized) Salsa than to the rough, aggressive (male) Salsa of the 1960s and 1970s.

As singer "Giro" Lopez claims:

Salsa used to be all about the timbales and bongo [both Latin percussion instruments], but now it's about sweet and elegant words, and the girls like it much more than the earlier, macho Salsa. (Washburne, 2008: 25)

Next to the more romantic lyrics, Salsa romantica was also called the feminine Salsa because of the soft, polished sound. According to a study led by Jim Schulke, the "Godfather of *Beautiful music*' radio" (Lanza, 2006: 156), female listeners aged between 18-49 prefer the sound of soft strings arrangements due to the fact that they can hear higher frequencies than men. Is it then no coincidence that many bands playing romantic Salsa make use of keyboards substituting a complete string section? As Washburne (2002: 113) mentions while referring to arranger Ricky González, many romantic Salsa compositions and arrangements are aiming for commercial success and therefore follow commercial guidelines. The new recording techniques, such as overdubbing and layering, are borrowed from North American popular music genres, in order to obtain a clean product. Due to such techniques, a smooth ambiance can be created, which among Salseros is the reason for calling the romantic Salsa the feminine Salsa (ibid.: 116).

The preference for Salsa dura among the polled women can be explained by the fact that Salsa romantica does not have such a driving beat as Salsa dura. Since most of the polled women, however, consider dancing as most important to them, Salsa dura is more appropriate since Salsa romantica is not used for dancing purposes most of the time, but instead mostly as background music, or as music listened to by a couple in a romantic situation.

Since Salsa dura concentrated on masculine topics and a harsh sound, and thus consequently targeted men, the music industry of the 1970s ignored the female market. With the creation of a romantic music style, the music industry concentrated their sales efforts on women.

As Sergio George said in an interview:

Women tend to focus more on the lyrics than men do and love to sing along to records (...) They want to be romanced either by the artist, or by the message of the song that they can apply to their own personal situation. (...) Women do not buy other female artists as much unless they sing songs that they can dedicate to a man. Generally these are songs of "revenge" for getting dumped by a man, or "you're not good enough for me, so forth, so forth." (www.descarga.com, 2007)

This quote of Sergio George, who is one of the most popular arrangers and producers at this moment, mentions songs recorded by female artists who sing about revenge on the patriarchal world. La India is such a vocalist, famous for lyrics where the woman is singing back to patriarchy. She uses the same violent language as male singers in order to challenge patriarchal gender structures. Aparicio considers those songs as important since they “articulate the struggles of Puerto Rican women and Latinas in the process of empowering themselves” (Aparicio, 1998: 156).

Next, you will find a transcription of the beginning of *Ese hombre* from her album *Dicen que soy* released in 1994<sup>24</sup>.

Ese hombre que tu vez ahi  
Que parece tan galante  
Tan atento y arrogante  
Lo conozco como a mi

This man that you see there  
that looks so gentle  
so kind and arrogant  
I know him as myself

Ese hombre que tu vez ahi  
Que aparente ser divino  
Tan Amable y efusivo  
Solo sabe hacer sufrir

This man that you see there  
that appears to be divine  
so polite and warm  
he only knows how to make somebody suffer

Es un gran necio  
Un estúpido engreído  
Egoísta y caprichoso  
Un payaso vanidoso  
Inconciente y presumido  
Falso Malo rencoroso  
Que no tiene corazón

He is very stubborn  
a stupid know-it-all  
egoistic and capricious  
an excessively proud clown  
unconscious and conceited  
false bad person and resentful  
who does not have a heart

Lleno de celos sin razones ni motivos  
Como el viento impetuoso  
Pocas veces cariñoso  
Inseguro de si mismo  
Insoportable como amigo  
Insufrible como amor

Filled with jealousy, without reason or motives  
like the impetuous wind  
really rarely lovely  
insecure of himself  
unsupportable as a friend  
insufferable as lover.

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<sup>24</sup> Video example 12 gives the reader an idea about a live performance of this song.

Ese Hombre que tu vez ahi  
Que parece tan amable  
Vanidoso y agradable  
Lo conozco como a mi

This man that you see there  
that looks so polite  
excessively proud and pleasant  
I know him as myself

Ese hombre que tu vez ahi  
Que parece tan seguro  
De pisar bien por el mundo  
Solo sabe hacer sufrir

This man that you see there  
that looks so secure  
about walking well on the world  
he only knows how to make somebody suffer

With this song, La India is rejecting the fixed gender identities and inverts the construction of the ‘bad’ and unfaithful woman by projecting such images on a man. The song represents a “displacement of the agency inherent in the gaze from man to woman” (Washburne, 2008: 152).

#### ***4.4 The female reaction to the constructed image of women in Salsa***

To this day, male singers and producers construct Latin American women in song lyrics according to male standards. Even if the violence against women diminished, you can still feel patriarchal power structure while listening to Salsa music.

Most commonly, the Latin American woman, and more specifically the *mulata*, is constructed as a mere “object of consumption, [and] as a commodity for the male” (Aparicio, 1998: 162). Women are thus reduced to the function of service or sexual desirability and are molded by men.

This section will not talk so much about discriminating lyrics, where singers utter violence against their wives or girlfriends, but instead study the sexualized image of *mulatas* in Salsa lyrics. Especially in the lyrics of Salsa romantica, you can recognize an obsession with several female body parts. Male singers especially focus on the hips and the pelvic movement of the *mulatas* and define them as “the embodiment of rhythm, movement, and erotic pleasure” (Aparicio, 1998: 143).

Beside the hips, the brown or olive skin, the red-colored lips, the seductive clothing, the breasts and the buttocks are sites of the male gaze expressed in songs. The lyrics of Bobby Valentin’s hit *Doña Bella* (2008) describe the beautiful woman:

*Sera su cara su pelo su risa su rítmico andar*  
*Lo que me gusta de ella* (It could be her face, her hair, her smile, her  
rhythmic way of walking, that I like from her).

Many examples exist where *mulatas* are celebrated for their rhythm and movements, and consequently simply represented as pure rhythm and swing. The most-used adjective to describe *mulatas* is the Spanish word for tasty, *sabrosa*, making reference to both rhythm and food. The use of food-related metaphors is also frequently applied to the bodies of *mulatas*. Such statements emphasize the male desire to consume the woman and possess her and her body (Aparicio, 1998: 147).

### EL DIABLO COLORA'O (Manolito y su Trabuco)

La mulata que viene llegando  
La que tiene el pueblo alborota'o  
Tiene un movimiento que se nota  
Y su mirada provoca a todo el que se ha acerca'o

La que tiene un tiempo diferente  
Pero dice mucha gente  
De que hay que andarse con cuida'o  
Dicen que es un Diablo colora'o  
Cuando pasa todo se estremece

Con su aroma que enloquese por su cuerpo structural

Pero dice mucha, mucha gente  
De que hay que andarse con cuida'o  
Dicen que un Diablo colora'o

La mulata que viene llegando  
La que tiene el lindo camina'o  
La que se pone ese vestido negro  
Pegadito asi a su cuerpo la que mira asi de la'o

La que tine un tiempo diferente  
Pero dice mucha gente  
que hay que andarse con cuidado  
Dicen que es el Diablo colora'o.

The *mulata* that is arriving  
the one that exits the whole village  
She has movements that are obvious  
and her look is provoking everybody  
that is approaching her

The one that has a different timing  
But many people say  
that you have to be careful  
They say that it is a purple/red devil  
When she passes by everything is  
shaking

with a smell that is driving crazy, and  
her nice-formed body

But there are many, many people  
that you have to be careful  
They say that it is a purple/red devil

The *mulata* that is arriving  
that has a nice way of walking  
that is wearing this black dress  
stacked to her body, and looking you  
from the side

The one that has a different timing  
But many people say  
that you have to be careful  
they say that it is a purple/red devil

Kutzinski (cited in Aparicio, 2000: 97) remarks that the representation as purely rhythm constructs *mulatas*

as another instance of black primitivism, foregrounding  
[their] physicality and body rather than [their] whole self  
as (...) thinking, rational subject[s].

It is also common to find comments, such as *Mueve tu cintura* (move your waist) or *esta negra es una fiera* (this black woman is a beast). All of those constructions make *mulatas* sexually desirable and categorize women as erotic objects.

However, one cannot only find this eroticized image in song lyrics, but also on album covers of Salsa artists. The two examples below illustrate how the female body is used to sell a product.



**Picture 13: Album cover of Los Van Van (Cuba)**



**Picture 14: Album cover of Tito Chicoma (Peru)**

In the online survey, participants were questioned about such covers. A total of 41,5% answered that they reject sexist covers, whereas 26,8% replied that they are interested in the music and not so much in album covers. These women did not care about the erotic representation of the female body. Among the women who rejected the female-discriminating covers, 47% were of Latin American origins (Colombians, Venezuelans, Uruguayans, Peruvians, and Mexicans). If 53% of ‘Western’ women reject the sexualized image of women, it is intriguing that Latin American celebrities such as Shakira, Jennifer Lopez or Salma Hayeka are admired by a European and North American female (and male) public. Guzman & Valvidia (2004: 213) claim that Latin American beauty is seen as “other,” and it is that “otherness” that makes them desirable. They are admired and desired because of the exoticism they possess. Since these Latin Americans succeeded in entering the mainstream popular culture, they are able to express their sexuality and still be taken seriously as artists.



**Picture 15: Salma Hayek**



**Picture 16: Jennifer Lopez**

Giles and Middleton (cited in Guzman & Valvidia, 2004: 209) claim that the iconic image, which Jennifer Lopez, Salma Hayek, and Shakira represent, “*resignify* the meanings surrounding a particular image, event or issue through their circulation in

popular culture.” It is fascinating that it is not only the press that is highlighting Lopez’s buttocks, but also the actress herself (see picture 16 above). These cases of such female Latin Americans are intriguing since they are on the one hand opening new spaces of possibilities for non-white women, while on the other hand following the stereotypes of the exotic and sexualized Latin American women (Guzman & Valvidia, 2004: 217).

The question one has to ask is why especially white women reject the erotic representation of the female body in Salsa songs and on album covers if they are at the same time watching movies of actresses such as Jennifer Lopez and Salma Hayek? One possible explanation could be the fact that both actresses have the control over their own bodies and choose to represent themselves as sensual women in public. The fact that they are not afraid of expressing their sexuality, while still being successful actresses, empowers them and challenges the patriarchal structure that considers women as subaltern subjects. The same phenomenon can be observed in the case of La India, or the Reggaeton singer Ivy Queen, who also does not fit the Puerto Rican patriarchal ideal of femininity, meaning polite and gentle (Báez, 2006: 70).

It is thus the bodily independence of Latin American women that is supported, whereas male constructions of women as sexual objects are rejected for their patriarchal power structures.

## 5. Comparison of women's taste in music with the general public

After having studied the female listening behavior, the reader will in the last part of this study gain more information about the status quo in Salsa music. In the section above, a detailed analysis was offered on the artists and genres that female Salsa lovers prefer. Now, information about which artists are in general the most popular will be provided. The main focus will be the comparison of male and female artists, as well as the themes worked out in the preferred song lyrics.

The data for this last chapter is gained through the study of the Latin Grammy awards as well as the official tunes of the annual Feria de Cali.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, the choices of the female participants of the online survey are compared to the sales of the online shop Amazon and to the online catalogue of Descarga<sup>26</sup>.

If one examines the most prominent Salsa bands and artists of today, one realizes that despite the increasing amount of female artists, men persist in dominating the scene. This year's Latin Grammy nominations do not, for example, include any female artist in the Salsa category, which is unfortunately not the first occurrence. Having a look at the winners of Latin Grammys, one becomes aware that, next to Celia Cruz, who received altogether five awards, only Shakira (four awards) and Gloria Estefan (three awards) can be seen as successful female artists ([www.latingrammy.com](http://www.latingrammy.com), 2009). A complete list of all female Grammy winners can be found in the attachment 2.

It is very fascinating that Celia Cruz is still the most successful female artist. Reviewing the best-of lists of the editors of, it is yet again Celia Cruz, who was celebrated for her music. In 2006, she was named among the best of the year for the remastered edition of her album *Cuba y Puerto Rico son ... Tito Puente y Celia Cruz*, originally released in 1966. In 2008, she was selected for the remastered version of *Son con Guaguanco* from the year 1966 ([www.descarga.com](http://www.descarga.com)). Furthermore, taking all her awards into consideration, she can truly be called the *Queen of Salsa*. One can even go a step further and dare to say that Marvette Pérez's statement that there are no women who could step into Celia Cruz's shoes (Negron-Muntaner, 2007: 112) reflects the truth.

Other prominent female singers' successes, such as Cucu Diamantes (present in the bestseller list of Amazon), who mixes Cuban music with funk and Hip Hop from New York, or the two Cuban singers Telmary and Haydée Milanes (who are among Descarga's editor's best-of in 2006 and 2008), who both mix Cuban music with Pop and Hip Hop, cannot even today measure up to the accomplishments of Celia Cruz. These artists follow the tradition of La India, who started the hybrid Salsa genre, mixing Salsa with other popular kinds of music. The participants of the survey

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<sup>25</sup> The fair of Cali (Colombia) has been celebrated since 1957. This cultural event takes place between December 25<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>. Its official name is "Feria de la Caña" (sugar cane fair), and it includes a parade of horseback riders, bullfights, beauty competitions, and a big Salsa festival, with performances of the most celebrated Salsa artists (<http://en.wikipedia.org>, 2009).

<sup>26</sup> Descarga is a small business located in Brooklyn, New York founded in 1991 because there was a lack of accessible information relating to Latin music. In its catalogue, you can typically discover hard-to-find back-catalog and independent label CDs, videos, books and instruments ([www.descarga.com](http://www.descarga.com)).

nevertheless mentioned none of these new *Salseras*. One possible explanation for this fact could be that the new female artists are in most cases still not acknowledged for their music.

If one looks back at the most prominent artist of the survey, namely Marc Anthony, one becomes aware that, while studying the sales at Amazon, the participants answered in accordance with the taste of the general public. Interestingly enough, whereas you can find his various albums among the most-sold on Amazon, Marc Anthony is mentioned in the best-of lists of Descarga only for the movie *El Cantante*, which shows Hector Lavoe's life and in which Anthony is the leading actor. Descarga, considered to belong to the most important educational resources about Latin music and respected for its taste among Salsa experts, does thus not agree with the taste of the masses.

As a last point, I want to analyze the songs of the Feria de Cali and see what kind of Salsa is selected as the annual hit of the fair. Considering all fifty-one songs named *Cancion de la feria de Cali*, one can observe several details. The first aspect one can observe is the fact that various types of music have been selected as the best song of the fair. Next to Salsa, most songs were traditional Colombian musical styles such as the *Cumbia*, from the Atlantic coast, or the *Porro*, a genre originating from the Pacific coast. However, as Federico Arboleda, director of the Feria de Cali, noticed, the selected song of the fair not only represents the taste of the Caleños, but of all Colombians who moved to the city, and who have brought their own musical styles with them. Therefore, every radio station chooses its own hit, which does not necessarily need to be Salsa or another genre popular in the city. Since the '80s, the selection of the hit of the Feria de Cali has become a huge business between the radio stations and the record companies, where money played the main role. Quite often, the inhabitants of Cali do not agree with the choices made by those organizations and therefore unofficially select the songs that are listened and danced to the most during the period of the main cultural event of the city (personal communication on August 17<sup>th</sup> 2009).

Due to today's multiple selections of fair hits, it is difficult to list all the songs since every year, various songs are called *song of the feria de Cali*.

The most useful source for the collection of the data is a video of a show at the *Teatro Municipal de Cali* in 2006. During this event, all official hits between 1958 and 2006 were presented.

Here are some interesting results of the study of these fifty-one songs<sup>27</sup>:

Among all the hits, seven female singers or all-women bands can be found. Four of the female singers (where I could unfortunately not define the name of one of the four) were singing traditional music, such as the Colombian Merengue, Cumbia, and Bambuco, as well as the Cuban Trova Campesina genre. In 2002, Orquesta Canela fused their song *Que Borrachera* Parranda with Reggaeton. Noteworthy is that only two female Salsa artists could land a hit during the Cali fair: the Caleño all-women band Son de Azúcar with their song *Caleño* (1992)<sup>28</sup> and Celia Cruz in the year 1998 with her song *La vida es un Carnaval*.

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<sup>27</sup> The complete list of all fifty-one songs can be found in the appendices (attachment 4).

<sup>28</sup> Please check video example 13 for the video clip of *Caleño*.



A second interesting factor is the song title and the lyrics. In Colombian Salsa, the focus is the word (Waxer, 2000: 156). A song becomes a hit if the lyrics can touch the listeners. It is fascinating to see that there are two repeating themes among all the hits: women and the city of Cali. This makes us guess that the two subjects are the most important ones among the population of Cali. The fact that beautiful women seem to be even more beloved than the city is quite fascinating.

Seven hits have titles that are connected to women. One possibility is to give the song a female name, such as the song *La Negra Celina* from the Orquesta de Cristobal Perez (1962) or *Juanita Ae* from the band La misma Gente (1986). A second common kind of title is to make reference to the female beauty, such as Piper Pimienta's hit *Las Caleñas son como las flores* (the women from Cali are like flowers) (1976) or the song *La Bella* (the beautiful one) of Lisandro Meza (1990). A third category is to simply call a song "mujer" (woman). This was done by the Orchesta La identidad, who called a song *Mujeres* (1987), Pastor Lopez, with his *Las Caleñas* (1979) and Alfredo Gutierrez with his hit *Dos mujeres* (1980).

Besides songs making reference to women, the second prominent theme is the city of Cali itself. Five of the fifty-one songs have titles that are connected to the city, varying between *La feria de Cali* of the Los daughter boys (1969) and *Mi Cali bella* (my beautiful Cali) of the Billos Caracas Boys (1971).

## Conclusions

As this study shows, male dominance is still common in today's Salsa scene. However, a considerable change can be observed. I have tried to show that female *Salseras* are actively participating in the Salsa scene, but also which problems they encounter in their struggle for acceptance.

At the heart of this research is the often-discussed invisibility of female musicians, which also applies to Salsa. Women playing Afro-Caribbean music have been mentioned since the 1500s, as a study of Cristobal Diaz Ayala shows. Interestingly, most women in Afro-Caribbean music were vocalists. Why are women more accepted as singers than as instrumentalists or composers? In order to come to an understanding of this problem, I first had to analyze the general reasons for women's absence in the Salsa scene.

Salsa is a musical style that developed in the 1960s and 1970s in the Latin American neighborhoods of New York. The music reflected the difficult life of the immigrants by employing an aggressive sound and lyrics, which most of the time uttered violence against women. The Salsa dura, as this genre is called, constructed a hypermasculinity by eliminating all femininity. This consequently meant that feminine values such as emotional feelings and sentimentality did not belong in this music. Due to the masculine, or *machismo*, character of Salsa, women were not supposed to be participating actively since this could mean a threat to the music's authenticity. The masculine character of Salsa was also expressed in album covers, the bad-boy image of singers and the political topics of Salsa tunes.

In general, the space of musical performances was considered inappropriate for women, as one thought this could lead them to become 'bad' women. In the patriarchal societies of Latin America, a girl's space consisted of the private home and church. They were prepared to become good wives and mothers and therefore did not have as much free time to participate in leisure activities, such as music, as male family members.

But, next to the restrictions due to gender roles, the sexual image of Latin American women, in particular *mulatas*, played an important role in the absence of female musicians. *Mulatas* are considered sexually available and promiscuous, and therefore women of mixed ancestry had difficulties to be accepted as serious musicians. While being on stage, most of the audience as well as fellow musicians saw them as sexual toys whose purpose was to entertain the band. The consequence of this was that it was extremely difficult for women to enter the professional music circuit.

The most intriguing question that remains is why were women who did succeed in entering the musical space usually singers?

There are several explanations for this fact. Women are universally accepted as mothers singing lullabies to their children. This tradition places them in a sentimental area, which is accepted by a patriarchal society. The second domain, in which women excel as singers, is church singing. Interestingly, both spaces are considered appropriate for 'decent' Latin American women, and therefore they are able to express themselves at these particular places through music. Since women were excluded from formal musical training in the past, the voice remained the most accessible instrument for them.

A final reason is the belief that men are in control of nature by manipulation through technology, whereas women are part of the male-controlled nature. Since singing does not need any technology, female vocalists stayed in control of their bodies and do not challenge patriarchal structures.

A last point is the fact that the female singers, who became professional musicians, normally stayed close to the romantic traditions, promoted by patriarchy, and usually sang compositions by men. They were thus singing the words of others and not directly expressing themselves.

While studying the lives and careers of three of the most influential vocalists, Celia Cruz, La Lupe, and La India, I realized that they used different performance practices and were all dealing with the fact that they are women in different ways.

Celia Cruz from the beginning was aware of the risk of being considered a sexual object and therefore constantly underlined that she was a decent woman. In the early stages of her singing career, she was even unable to dance in public. She succeeded in being accepted as one of the rare female singers who influenced the development of Salsa music and has been awarded on several occasions. Due to her exceptional musical skills, including the ability to improvise, which fellow musicians considered a masculine quality, Celia was not seen as a sexual toy, but was called *the Queen*. The main characteristics of Celia Cruz were her masculine voice and her elegant, feminine costumes.

Whereas Celia Cruz was not trying to hide her femininity, La Lupe reflected a more masculine prejudice on stage. Contrary to Celia Cruz, the Cuban singer La Lupe has been neglected many times in the history of Salsa. The reason for this might be her aggressive stage behavior and her self-eroticization as a feminist act of resistance. Her performances were marked by stripping acts, yelling, and moments of ecstasy. Contrary to Celia Cruz, La Lupe used to wear erotic clothing and make-up commonly linked to prostitutes. By combining these female visual attributes with male gestures, La Lupe performed an *in-between* gender identity.

Both Celia Cruz and La Lupe were influencing the young La India, who was born in New York, and who used to sing dance music. La India is much more feminist in her songs and is trying to control her music by participating in the production process and *singing back* to patriarchy by inverting the violent lyrics about women and projecting them onto men. Her performance style resembles the one of La Lupe. La India is using the same sexualized looks, while behaving on stage like a 'bad guy', including smoking a cigar and acting aggressively towards musicians and audiences.

Since the 1990s, a second important category of female musicians emerged: the all-women bands. Especially in the city of Cali (Colombia), all-women bands gained enormous success. The reasons for their initial advent are closely linked to the general empowerment of women in Colombia. In the 1980s, musical education was democratized, which allowed a larger population, and especially women, to receive musical lessons. Furthermore, Colombian women were business-orientated and had a strong feeling for entrepreneurship. Most of the musicians were young, unmarried and did not have children. Thus, they clearly broke with gender conventions in order to be able to work as musicians.

However, if one is observing a performance by an all-women band such as *D'Cache*, one becomes aware that the musicians are not completely rejecting patriarchal values and accept the eroticized image of *mulatas*. Such values are expressed in the image of the musicians (wearing erotic clothes, exaggerated make-up, and high heels) and the

names of bands that make allusion to female qualities, such as the band name *Son de Azucar* (azucar meaning sugar), for example.

Furthermore, they are mostly dependent on a male producer because female producers hardly exist in Salsa music. This is a reality that most of the female musicians are aware of. As such, female artists have to follow the decisions of a male producer and be judged as inauthentic artists since they allow the musical decisions to be taken by somebody else (a man).

What is interesting about these all-women bands is that they are pushing for women's independence whilst being under the control of the male music business.

One has to conclude that even though women are still not completely autonomous, these bands have opened new spaces for women and possibilities to become economically independent.

According to Aparicio, one has to be aware of the differences between 'Western' feminism and the Latin American empowerment of women. The latter choose to dress in short and tight clothes in order to demonstrate that they are in control of their bodies and sexual desire. Through their actions, they are rejecting the sexual repression promoted by the Catholic Church. Furthermore, one has to be conscious about the fact that the concept of beauty is not static, but differs from culture to culture and over time.

For now, all-women bands have succeeded in receiving the attention from the Salsa public, which is of major importance. The fact that they had to make use of a sexualized image then is for most of the bands only secondary. They are aware of the fact that a woman's image sells better, and they use this method to continue with their feminist movement. The end justifies the means.

The third type of female musicians, the instrumentalists, is to this day still underrepresented. Various factors have led to the marginal position of this group. First of all, most of the instruments used in Salsa bands are considered 'male' instruments. Only the piano is believed to be an appropriate instrument for women. The reasons 'male' instruments, such as brass or percussion, are chosen by a woman are often based upon peer/friendship or inspiration by famous female musicians, who serve as role models. Slowly, a change in women's instrument choices can be noticed. Gendered instruments are, however, not the only reason for the lack of female instrumentalists in top Salsa formations. The fact that one has to be hired by a male producer or bandleader leads to a preference for male musicians. One tends to work with musicians of one's own environment; most of the time friends. In order to enter the music scene, women thus have to become friends with male musicians first.

Repeatedly, men believe that women cannot play as powerfully as men. They consider them too weak to endure a powerful performance of a Salsa dura band. However, female horn players prove the contrary. Intriguing then is that most of the all-women bands hire male horn players and even more specifically trumpet players. In general, I realized during my conversations with female as well as male musicians that female instrumentalists are slowly becoming more accepted. Most of the time, they are considered to be just another musician. Normally, only the audience still regards a female instrumentalist as an exception. Of course, there are also many *machos* still in the Salsa business unfortunately, but according to the interviewed musicians, they are slowly diminishing.

After having analyzed the actual situation of female musicians, this study focused on the female devotees listening and dancing to Salsa. For this research, I made use of the results of my online survey and compared them with extant theories.

One has to be aware that an audience is not passively consuming a cultural commodity. On the contrary, it is the audience that is producing cultural meaning and without this, music would indeed be meaningless. Therefore, it is important for all musicological research to take the listeners into consideration and analyze their taste and judgments. As Salsa is a hybrid genre, with a heterogeneous audience, the listener's personal understanding of the music is unique. Musical taste is closely related to ethnicity and special age groups, and most importantly to personal experiences. 'Good' music is the music one can identify with, contrary to the 'bad' music of others that one is forced to listen to in one's daily life. Through our identification with one specific genre, we consider ourselves experts and able to judge music.

Female meaning of Salsa music varies according to nationality, age, and personal experiences. The key term in such a study is Fiske's "productive pleasure." Female Salsa listeners create meaning that makes sense for them in their specific situation. They actively consume the music and produce personal, flexible meanings. Therefore, the reaction toward sexist lyrics, for example, is not the same for every woman. In fact, most Latin American women that grew up with this phallogentric musical style do not take such lyrics seriously, whereas 'Western' women are most of the time shocked by the violent content of Salsa songs. This outcome is connected to music's feature of *aide-mémoire*. Through music, we are able to recall special events or people important in our lives. For many Latin American women, Salsa connects them with their past and more specifically their mothers. Modern generations of Latin Americans living in the United States, or 'Western' Salsa devotees, lack such intimate experiences and consequently regard Salsa music as a mere commodity.

What is it now precisely that women love about Salsa? In general, the results of my survey showed clearly that dancing is an important element of Salsa. One could have thought that the message of a song would be what matters to women, but the polled women thought that the rhythm together with the dance ability of Salsa music was the most important element of Salsa music. Noteworthy is the fact that women of all nationalities have the same experience. Therefore, no distinction can be made between Latin American and 'Western' women. Whereas for Latin American women Salsa dancing is experienced as a space of freedom and reaffirmation of one's own cultural background, 'Western' devotees use it to achieve a better self-esteem, by being allowed to exercise 'forbidden' movements, such as the movement of the lower body for example.

A further point of this research was women's taste in Salsa. The survey showed that, contrary to what one could presume, women prefer male singers. This can be explained by the fact that they feel an attraction to the opposite sex. This result is remarkable since female artists sing a lot about experiences shared by a large number of other women. However, the female audience of Salsa music does not seem to prefer such lyrics. But as mentioned above, lyrics are in general not as important to female Salsa fans.

Next, a preference for Salsa dura can be noted. This is another surprise since there is a belief that women in general tend to listen more to romantic music. This surprising fact can be explained by the slower tempo and the use of less aggressive percussion. Since the polled fans claimed dancing as most important to them, Salsa dura is more appropriate since Salsa romantica is most of the time not used for dancing purposes.

As my results show, the only exception was the Salsa romantica singer Marc Anthony, who was selected most often as favorite artist. Marc Anthony's large success among a broad audience can be explained by the style of his music. He is known for crossing over, by singing English-spoken songs and his entrance into the mainstream popular culture. The polled women follow the general trend of the masses. Analyzing sales of Salsa records, several albums of Marc Anthony are among the most sold.

Examining one more time Salsa's lyrics and album covers, one realizes an obsession with *mulatas*' bodies. Especially, the focus on hips, buttocks and breasts is noticeable. Among the participants of the online survey, 41,5% reject sexist album covers (47% Latin Americans, 53% 'Western' women). Only if female celebrities such as Jennifer Lopez or Shakira choose to take on a sensual image do women seem to accept and even admire the sexual looks of women. Male constructions of the female body are on the other hand rejected for their patriarchal character.

At present, a change in attitude among both male and female Salsa fans can be observed. However, female musicians are still not as popular as male musicians, as the lists of the Latin Grammys illustrate. The only woman able to compete with male artists to this day is Celia Cruz. Also, the hits of the annual fair in Cali show that female artists are underrepresented, whereas songs dealing with women and their beauty are extremely popular.

While on the local level more and more female musicians appear, and are recognized for their musical skills, the top bands are still dominated by men. It is important that fans, musicians and the record companies become aware of the fact that female musicians exist, and that many of them play on the same level as men do.

What became visible during this research is that unfortunately many decisions that are taken in the music business are still led by patriarchal values. Too often, musicians are still hired according to their gender instead of their musical skills. This is a sad truth, and I personally think that in music the gender of the person playing the trumpet should not matter. What should matter is the musicality. The same attitude should be applied in academics, where female musicians should just be included in the general history of a musical genre and not be positioned as an exception, or even worse, completely neglected.

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## Pictures

Picture 1: La Lupe, Celia Cruz and La India

[www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

Picture 2: Celia Cruz in 1950

<http://www.biografiasyvidas.com/biografia/c/cruz.htm>

Picture 3: La Lupe

[www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org)

Picture 4: La India Live

<http://www.azsalsa.net>

Picture 5: Cover of *Llegó la India*

[www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

Picture 6: Son de azucar

Lise Waxer: las caleñas son como las flores

Picture 7: D'Cache live  
Homepage D'Cache ([www.orquestadcache.com](http://www.orquestadcache.com))

Picture 8: D'Cache  
Homepage D'Cache ([www.orquestadcache.com](http://www.orquestadcache.com))

Picture 9: horn section of *Baconga Orquesta femenina*  
[www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

Picture 10: *Coro* singers of Gilberto Santa Rosa  
Picture made by myself during a concert of Gilberto Santa Rosa at North Sea Jazz festival 2009

Picture 11: Jose Lugo, pianist of Gilberto Santa Rosa  
Picture made by myself during a concert of Gilberto Santa Rosa at North Sea Jazz festival 2009

Picture 12: George Delgado, Luisito Quintero, and Jorge Gonzalez  
Courtesy of Martin Cohen ([www.congahead.com](http://www.congahead.com))

Picture 13: Album cover of Los Van Van  
[www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

Picture 14: album cover of Tito Chicoma  
<http://salsanadamas.blogspot.com>

Picture 15: Salma Hayek  
[www.theinsider.com](http://www.theinsider.com)

Picture 16: Jennifer Lopez  
[blog.thesource4ym.com](http://blog.thesource4ym.com)

## APPENDICES

### 1 Interviews

#### ***1.1 Interview with Maite Hontelé on July 6th 2009 (translated from Dutch into English by the author)***

J.S. Maybe you can start by explaining to me how you decided to become a Salsa trumpet player. I mean on one hand to play the trumpet, and on the other hand choosing Salsa music.

M.H. Well, actually this is a special story. My father had a huge Salsa collection at home. So, since I have been born, everyday I have been listening to Cuban and Colombian music and music coming from New York; basically to all he had. I was listening to *Conjunto folklórico* a lot, for example the song *Cuba Linda* I have been listening to all my life. But I also listened to Flamenco, since my father played the flamenco guitar ... but also the piano. We even had the music of *Bach* at home, but mostly Salsa.

When I was nine, I got my first trumpet. This was not really by choice, since the *Fanfare* from our village needed a trumpet player.

J.S. But did you like the idea of playing music?

M.H. Yes, I already took some piano lessons at a music school. And my parents liked the idea of me playing music. I was still really young.

But then I started playing the trumpet. It was important that many friends of mine got a trumpet too. However, they didn't like it as much. The reason why was that they didn't really know in which music style you could play the trumpet. I, on the other hand, knew that I could play Salsa music on my trumpet. This is why I enjoyed trying out that instrument. After a while I could play a bit. It was then, while listening to a record of *Sonora Ponceña*, that I dreamed of playing Salsa music. When I was 14, I started playing in my first Salsa band. There was a workshop at the *UCK* in Utrecht, with *Stan Lokin*, a well-known arranger from Suriname. From that moment on I started playing a lot; in various bands, and also as substitute for other bands. At the age of 17, I finally decided that I wanted to become a trumpet player. This is the story, a story of coincidences. Because, if the *Fanfare* hadn't been in need for a trumpet, but instead in need of a trombone, ....

J.S. Did you never consider to become a singer?

M.H. No, because I wasn't a good singer. So, that was nothing that I was really aiming for. And with Salsa music, you need to have knowledge of the Spanish language if you want to be a singer, which I didn't have. So, this is why the trumpet was right for me.

What was important for me was the trumpet player of the *Conjunto folklórico*, "*Chocolate*", he was my hero. I was listening a lot to his awkward expression, maybe to his tapes... and thought: if one day I could approach his way of playing, then I

would be happy. It was his sound that I was always searching for. No seriously, I've never wanted to become a singer.

And, talking about women, and the feminine side,... I had never the impression that the trumpet was too much of a masculine instrument, or that I want to be a singer, because then I could wear nice dresses.

J.S. For you personally, has it never been an issue that you are a woman who is playing the trumpet? In the *Fanfare*, or later in the conservatory?

M.H. well, for musicians it is really normal. If they see that you are passionate about what you are doing, then they like it. It's the non-musicians who always ask: OH, how special is it that women are playing the trumpet in Salsa music. From those people you constantly get comments. I normally react by saying: Well, yes, it is special, but ....

J.S. So you never had problems; also concerning your fellow students?

M.H. Well, in school, not. But I have the impression that for example for some bands in the Netherlands, it is hard for a woman to enter, since you have band members (men) that might not like that. I don't care too much about that, but sometimes I ask myself if that is the case because I am not "one of the boys". It is not only about how you play in a band, but the group feeling is also very important.

J.S. And there you have the feeling that if you would be a man, ...

M.H. well, once I had an audition for a band, which was searching for a masculine member. I did the audition anyway, because they didn't have many trumpet players, and finally they picked me. Only later I heard that they initially wanted another man in the band. So, in that case you have to prove yourself even more. This is the most obvious example I have to tell. For the rest I didn't have many occasions where I thought: oh, because he is a man he has better chances getting the job.

J.S. In all the bands you played, did you never have the feeling that you had to give more than a hundred percent in order to keep the job, and not lose it to someone else?

M.H. no. I play the way I play, and what I can play, and I always give a 100 percent on a gig. If this is not enough, well than it is not enough. And if it is ok, than it is nice and good. However, when I was 17 or 18, I played a lot with Antillean bands, and several times people commented on my looks and not on my playing skills. And this is not what I want. I want to be judged on my playing and not on the fact that I am a woman. And this is sometimes difficult.

J.S. Do you sometimes wonder what they really think about your playing? That they think that it is nice for a woman, but, .... Maybe not good enough?

M.H. Well, yes, I occasionally had that feeling, but I think that men have those situations, too. This is a difficult situation in the music business. I try, if somebody asks me how I liked a performance, to be honest, and if I didn't like it I say so. But this is of course all really subjective. If somebody comes after a concert and tells you: Nice playing! .... Well, what is this worth? Of course, if you play your thing, in front



of an audience of let say 50 people, there are obviously people that do not like your style or think: why isn't she playing higher? Fortunately though, on the other hand there are people who like what you do. I try to think about this as less as possible. I am not a person that is going home after a concert and thinks: I am never going on stage anymore.

I am sometimes insecure, but I don't know how to explain this. I just don't want to know about those things, because they make you really fragile I protect myself that way.

J.S. Talking about playing the trumpet, as a woman do you have some disadvantages? Or is your body built in the way that you can do exactly what men do?

M.H. No, It is exactly the same as with men. Well, I think that men might have bigger lungs, but in the end however it depends on how you use the air. Even people with asthma can play the trumpet. I don't want to generalize but in my opinion men can endure more pain. They don't worry as much about hurting their lips while playing high and loud notes. By contrast I always take care of and want to protect my lips. For the rest, I don't think so ..... Well, there is one thing I realized while teaching. Women don't want to be seen with a big belly. But the problem is that when you are playing trumpet, you have to inhale in the right way, including breathing in with your belly. Sometimes I had the same experience while wearing a dress. And then I am also a bit more careful with my breathing. Obviously though that's not the right thing to do. You should be really relaxed. I try to communicate this to my female students and tell them that technique is not based on how it looks, but how it feels. I don't think that this is a problem for men.

J.S. So this is something you are aware of?

M.H. Yes, I am thinking about that while I am on stage. However, it depends on the situation. If I am playing in a horn section, then it doesn't matter, because people can't see me properly. On the other hand, if I play a solo in the front of the stage under the spotlight while I am wearing a fitted dress then I am conscious about my belly.

J.S. But you will wear your dress anyway, won't you?

M.H. I will definitely wear it, yes. But what is difficult about playing the trumpet is finding the right time to eat something. If you eat too close before the concert, then you still have a full stomach, and your belly is more noticeable. If you eat too early, then you will be hungry during the concert, and will miss some energy that you need to play So I always try to watch out when to eat. I try to eat one hour before the gig, but many times you can't chose.

J.S. How is your relation with the public and the Press? These days you are playing a lot in Colombia, right?

M.H. yes, Colombia is amazing

J.S. yes, over there you are in every newspaper. How is the public here in the Netherlands, except that they say: oh how special you are...?

M.H. Over here I am special but not extraordinary. The audience surely looks longer at me and tells me later how special my performance was but that's normally everything.

I performed two days ago, and somebody asked to take a picture with me. Over here this is quite unusual. It doesn't happen since the public doesn't dare to make contact, or just simply don't need the contact. They have their own party, and don't need the contact with the musicians.

My project, *Llego la mona* is special over here, but is on the other hand nothing extremely amazing. People care about the music, the production, the musicians that are playing on the record etc. What makes it special here is the fact that I am so well known in Colombia. Then all of a sudden people show more interest, since this is unusual for them.

In Colombia you are dealing with completely different people. They are amazingly nice, and always try to make me feel good. On my last tour, that I did with the band *Rumbata*, I received blessings regularly.

J.S. How does this come? Is it because you are a woman, or because you are blond?

M.H. well I heard from some women in the public that I inspire them, and that I am an example for them, that they get the energy and courage to take music lessons. Of course this is amazing. It is the best that can happen to you as a musician.

What was the precise question again?

J.S. I asked if this admiration had to do with the fact that you are a woman, or because you are blond, which is really special, or maybe the combination with being a musician?

M.H. In Colombia you always have a special status as a foreigner. They find it amazing that somebody is coming to their country. They are so proud of Colombia, and enjoy showing it to others. Well I am blond, and play Salsa with bands such as *Rumbata*, *Cubop City Big Band* or my band, *La mona*, which is a style that they love. So it is a combination. They are so proud of their culture, and if you come and play their music as a woman, on the trumpet, .... you speak their language, ... For them this is fantastic.

J.S. Now we talked about the female public. What about men?

M.H. Well, men, too. It is strange, because they are so respectful. Well, one once proposed to me via Facebook, but ... For example in Cuba it is terrible. There is something else I want to say. I can't take lessons from a Cuban because they always try to seduce me. I have one example. A great trumpet player who also played with *Buena Vista Social Club* is living in Madrid. I was there once to play and jam, and wanted to take lessons. I contacted him, and he invited me to come over to his apartment. This was of course exciting, since he is a great player. I knew that he was married, and I liked that. In the entrance was a portrait of his wife. While I was warming up his wife called him and they started to argue on the phone. When he came back I asked if everything was ok. He said that it was ok, and we continued the lesson. Shortly afterwards he was called again and started fighting again. Finally, at the end of the class, he asked me how I would like the idea of two trumpet players

starting a relationship. All I wanted was to take a class, and in fact I wanted to repeat the lesson. But then I thought that this was not what I wanted.

I also don't accept much. If I have the impression that men want more, I block it immediately. I think it's professional. All I want is to take a lesson, and I don't want to worry about things like that. Furthermore I want to feel safe.

I was once in Cuba, but don't think of going back to take classes. Maybe for a vacation.

J.S. And in Colombia it is different?

M.H. Yes. You attract a nice attention, but they are really respectful.

J.S. But don't you have sometimes the impression that you are just notable because you are a woman. Because you normally play in a section and only sometimes play solos.

M.H. well, I can't change this, I am a woman. An experience I had during a jam session in September.... You play a solo, and the public is exploding immediately, because they not only see a woman that they find attractive, but also hear that I have the knowledge of the music. Then they even get more enthusiastic. Fortunately I also get the satisfaction that they like my music.

What I find difficult on the other hand is that Colombians are really nice and can tell you pretty quickly "I love you". Sometimes it is hard for me then to judge if they really mean the music and if they honestly like what I do.

J.S. Can you make the difference between Dutch and Latin American musicians concerning their attitude towards you?

M.H. It is difficult, because so far I haven't played as much in Latin America. I played in March with some bands, but I couldn't tell a difference. Well, what I said before, in the Antillean bands I felt like "the woman in the band". There you are look at more often. In a band such as the *Cubop City Big Band* and I don't have this feeling. There I am just "One of the gang"...

What I noticed in Colombia is a difference in energy. And there are also fewer women in the professional circuit. Over there you have the all-women bands there, like for example *D'cache*. They contacted me to play with them on a tour. I have played with some women-bands in Holland.

At one point I played in too many bands, and had to make choices. In principle, I don't want to do it, because then you are really considered to be a woman first and then a musician.

Obviously it is an intelligent product, because those bands sell a lot of records. But I don't want to be part of that business.

I don't have anything against all-women bands. But if you have to wear hot pants, and look like a prostitute, then ... no.

J.S. Do you know how the Colombians feel about those bands?

M.H. I don't know. Colombians are generally very critical.

J.S. But they also like good-looking women

M.H. ok, but .. well this is really interesting. Well of course you have machos there in Colombia. Those would probably listen faster and watch all-women bands. But I think that the intellectual Salsa lover, the one who is a fan of *Ruben Blades*, and the *Fania All Stars*, doesn't listen to them. Only if he is desperately in need of seeing beautiful women. Of course there is an audience for those bands, but this is not the one that I want to reach with my music.. Actually I am consciously choosing my kind of audience. J.S. ok, but then, if the music is nice, would you then be more positive towards all-women bands?

M.H. Yes, then it would be ok. If the people and the music are nice, and if the dresses are ok, then I would like to do it. Then you are not only considered to be an object?

J.S. In general how do you think about this? Should women play in all-women bands or should they try to play in "normal" bands?

M.H. Everybody should make their own choices.

J.S. and you chose for the good music first?

M.H. Yes. But honestly, I prefer to play in mixed bands, since all-women bands run the risk of only being booked because of the fact that they are women. I choose for my trumpet to play good music. Two years ago, I almost wanted to stop playing, because I didn't play with the musicians I wanted, and because I couldn't play the music I listened to as a child. I was missing the energy. I earned my money, but was not really happy. I continued, but only with the bands I really liked. Then I started my own band, and there all of a sudden I was a trumpet player and the woman on the cover of the record. I even put on a dress; this was kind of weird for me in the beginning. I had the feeling, that there would also be the possibility that people would only buy the record because there is a woman with a trumpet on the cover. But I want them to put on the record, like the music, and that they then say: plus there is a sexy woman on top.

J.S. But don't you think that it helps anyway?

M.H. of course. And I also take advantage of it to a certain point. Of course I found this strange in the beginning. I am so negative toward the kind of business that is selling the product woman, and now I am doing the same? But I am a woman (laughs) what can I do?

And it would be stupid to be in jeans on the cover of my record. I did not really think a lot about how sexy I should dress. I just thought...well I am a nice-looking woman

J.S. but you but you did not choose the hot pants, did you?

M.H. (laughs) no I didn't.

Oh, something that is important. I took classes with Hermine Schneider, and she really inspired me. Because of her I realized that a woman can play the trumpet, and

even that a woman can play the trumpet in a Salsa band. As a child I also went to concerts of hers, and she was just great.

J.S. Was she your first teacher?

M.H. She gave me improvisation classes. When I was 14. Another idol was *Saskia Laroo*, another female trumpet player. It was not because of how they played, but more to see them and realize that it is possible.

J.S. But do you differentiate between musical idols and women ...

M.H. yes, it's true I do. With Saskia and Hermine it was because I could see women that played the same music I wanted to play. Hence it is possible. *Chocolate* touched my heart deeply. He was my musical inspiration.

J.S. So it was important for you to have women as idols

M.H. I think it was really important. Well I am a person that is going for it ... so in the end I would have continued doing it without them either way.

When I took lessons with Hermine in improvisation I could easier forget about my shyness. I was really afraid. With a male teacher it might have been even harder, but that is difficult to say in retrospective.

J.S. But were you also afraid of play in front of men?

M.H. Well, I learned to improvise...I was afraid of exposing myself completely. Because Hermine is a woman it was probably easier.

J.S. Let's talk about your family and friends one more time. How do they feel about you playing the trumpet?

M.H. My mother has always supported me. She accompanied me to workshops and exams.

Well, let me think about something. This is interesting.

I have always been a tough girl. Some men can handle this, but some don't. Some of my teachers had problems to communicate with me. I had the feeling that they also didn't really know how to teach a woman. For example, one of the teachers was in fact really unpleasant. Sometimes I was insecure in his lessons, but he was incapable of helping me. This is then a collision between men and women. A male student would have probably had it easier in this kind of a situation.

J.S. It was probably quite unusual for the teacher too. For example to teach the breathing, where you have to touch the stomach of the students to show them how to breathe in.

M.H. Yes, that is true. I agree. I also had problems with this. I also had a teacher who did sexist jokes. This you can't do if you have an 18-year-old girl in your lesson that is already shy and insecure.

J.S. and if you teach? Do you attract more girls?

M.H. Mh, no. Well, girls find it in general nice to see that there is a woman who gives the lesson. Then they see that it is possible for a girl to play the trumpet. What I do while teaching is to support the girls in their choice to play the trumpet.

But I am not really a feminist. My mother was a real feminist at the time where this movement came up.

I think that if you are teaching girl and boys you should only interact when boys are making comments about the girls playing an instrument. But for the rest, I think you should just treat the fact that girls play the trumpet as something completely normal.

I am still thinking about things that happened to me.

Well in the *Fanfare* where I played, it was really normal for women to play the trumpet. Maybe there were even more women than men. But what you see is that they don't continue to become professional musicians.

J.S. Do you think that this is because of a patriarchic society?

M.H. In the world of the *Fanfaires* you have women that get married at the age of 20 and have children. They then maybe stay in the *Fanfare*. This happens more in the small villages than in the cities.

The difficulties you encounter to found a family could be a reason for women not to become professional musicians. I on the other hand think that you can find a solution for everything.

This is really nice. I am really thinking about everything I experienced.

Oh, do you know what I find really stupid? There are many women that have a bad posture because they are afraid of standing straight and therefore hide and bow to the front. This is bad for your technique. Women do this, because they think that standing too straight can be perceived as being too masculine. I think that if you choose to play the trumpet you should stand straight to have a good technique and not be afraid of this.

Maybe there are also teachers, male teachers that are afraid to tell girls that they have to stand straight, with the chest pushed out. And maybe girls are reacting strange to such comments, because they take them the wrong way.

J.S. Maybe to conclude: Did the fact that you are a woman influence you career; positively or negatively?

M.H. I think that now, with *Llego la mona*, being a woman definitely helps. So it is a positive influence. But on the other hand I occasionally have it more difficult as a woman. So I think it is in balance.

J.S. Oh, one last question. As a bandleader do you then choose a musician regardless their gender?

M.H. Yes, I go for the best, man or woman, that doesn't matter.

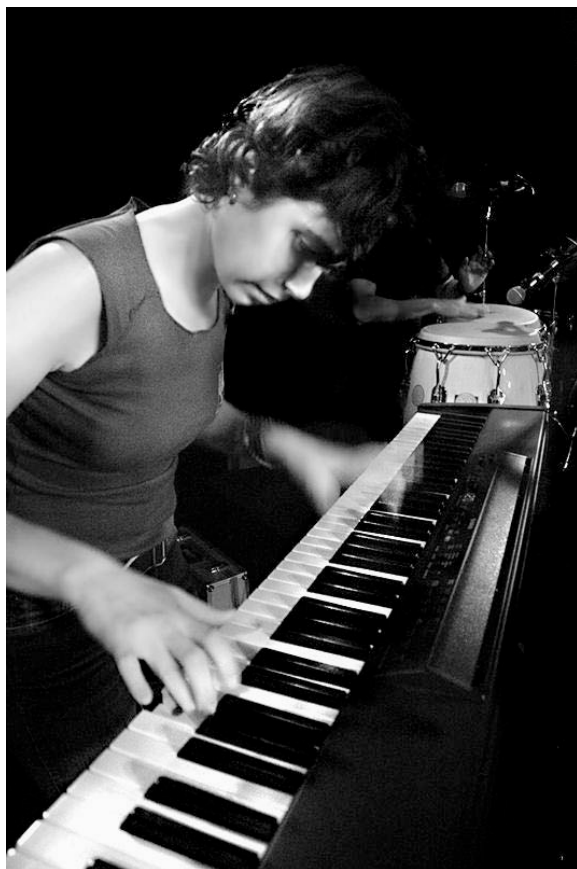
I don't make any difference. I will probably not select really macho musicians though...because the energy has to be good, and I have to be able to work with them. I find it difficult to work with extreme machos.

J.S. Thanks a lot Maite for all your answers. I think that this will be more than enough

M.H. you are welcome. Thank you for the nice questions.



## 1.2 *Interview with Anabell Febles Gutierrez on July 30<sup>th</sup> 2009*



J.S. Why did you choose to become a Salsa musician?

A.F. As a kid I played the electric organ... those Yamaha organs. At that time I really wanted to become a musician, but in Venezuela, where I grew up, you don't have the studies available. No conservatories like here in Europe. At the end I started studying languages. But I always remained being interested in music. When I moved to Germany I met people that were studying in Maastricht. They convinced me to do the entrance exam for the Conservatory. At the end I was admitted to the Jazz department, without having had real piano lessons before. It was there that I heard from the Conservatory in Rotterdam, where you could study Latin music. After a year of studies I decided to move to Rotterdam.

It was in Maastricht that I started to listen to Latin music and Salsa, and collecting old records. I don't remember listening to Salsa in Venezuela. It was not really accepted among the middle-classes to listen to Salsa. It was considered being the music of the poor people. Only the ones that left the country of origin tended to listen to folkloric music. Now that is changing, fortunately, and Salsa and the folkloric traditions are culturally more accepted.

J.S. Was it ever an issue at school that you were a female pianist?

A.F. Well, I never felt like that. It was only an issue that I couldn't play the piano. Especially the ensemble lessons were quite hard, since I lacked the necessary knowledge. But somehow I always got accepted. I think it was because of my rhythm. But I never had the impression that people had a problem with me being a woman. The only think I realize, is that I am usually the only woman in a band. When I started, there were almost no women at all playing Latin music. Today, even if there are many more women, you are still most of the time the only female band member.

J.S. Did you had a problem with being the only woman in a band? That musicians and audience tend to differentiate between you and the rest of the band members?



A.F. Well, Latinos can be a bit annoying sometimes. Even though they are your friends, and know you. But on a musical level I never felt uncomfortable. Of course people are looking at me. But it also depends on how I am dressed. And where it is. There are differences between countries, too. It is not the same playing a gig in Latin America and here. Here people are looking much less at other people than in Latin America. Guys do not look at girls here...compared to South American countries.

J.S. Do you think that it is special for people here to see a female piano player?

A.F. I think it is. And almost every time I play somewhere people will come to me, ... But these are non-musicians, since most of the musicians here know me. I have been playing here in the Netherlands for eight years now. So, that's quite a while.

J.S. What do you think in general about all-women bands?

A.F. If I am really honest, I find it a stupid thing to do. The same counts for a band, that for example would need a trumpet player and would say: No, but we can't call Maite (Hontelé), because we are really a guys-band. Here in the Netherlands you can sell those all-women bands sometimes. When I started my small band, it was not meant to be a girls bands. I started with Bulu (Viloria, a Venezuelan percussionist), and then I was thinking about whom to ask. At the end there were almost only women in the band, which I didn't even realize. Bulu was pointing it out to me.

When people then call me to book the band, they precise that they want an all-women band.

I mean I don't mind if a band has only female band members. But I mind if a band I played with sometimes, just do it to sell it as a product. Because then, if you need a musician as a replacement you have to call a woman, independent of her skills. So you care more about the product than the musical aspect of the band.

J.S. do you think women have more difficulties entering a band?

A.F. Well, this is complicated since it depends on various things. The priorities of women are very different from those of men. It is no problem for a man to make a living from music his whole life. I think women have more priorities in their lives and this is why we might not develop as far in one single thing. This is my experience. I know my limits in playing, since I am not so much practicing at home compared to guys, who are exclusively focused on their musical career.

In Latin America, for sure you have great female musicians, but they just want to have a family, and therefore do not join a band.

The other problem is the culture. Salsa is happening in a macho space. It might have been in the past that patriarchal structures didn't allow a woman to become a musician. Also because Salsa was mainly happening in the poor neighborhoods where girls were not meant to hang around the whole day learning how to play this kind of music. For boys on the other hand, this was much easier.

I remember, that as a little girl, I was constantly pounding stuff. But instead of putting me into percussion classes, I received lessons on the electronic organ. But I was on the other hand also never thinking about becoming a percussion player. For sure, if I had a strong desire to become a drummer, my parents would have supported me.

J.S. Quite often you are playing percussion in bands. Is there a difference between a female piano player and a percussionist?

A.F. I am not sure. Nowadays everybody is able to do all kinds of things. This is why you see many mixed stuff happening.....not only in the music world. In companies this is happening too. Maybe in 30 years, the blending is complete, and you have as many women as men playing in bands. Actually, here in the Netherlands, this is happening already sometimes.

I mean it should be about the music. I wouldn't like playing with unskilled girls in order to have more concerts.

J.S. So if the musical level is ok, than you don't mind if the band you are asked to play in is an all-women band, or do you?

A.F. No, but then it is also not important anymore. Then it doesn't matter if you are a girl or a guy.

Talking about Latino bands over here, I never had the feeling that they called be because I am a woman, but also never not called me because I am a woman. They just think: oh let's call Anabell, she is a piano player, I know her.

J.S. And what do you think about the image of female musicians. The way they dress...

A.F. oh no, hot pants and this kind of stuff I really hate. I am a very specific case, because I am also not a girly girl. Usually when I play in theaters or on a big festival I am normally well dressed. I don't like to perform there in jeans. I wear my hair loose and I am really dressed up for a presentation. However, I am not that kind of woman that will put on short pants and high heels. If the place where I am performing is simply a dance parlor, where people don't come to watch a performance, than I am also going more casually.

I don't like bands that are not well dressed. Like in Pop music, guys go with torn up jeans for example. In Latin America you have uniforms quite often; everybody will wear the same suit.

J.S. But I think that the whole way of dressing up is a cultural thing. In Latin America women in general care always about how they look; much more than over here for example.

A.F. Yes, but guys too. Girls always wear lipstick, high heels, and perfume. Here, in general I don't like uniforms, or the Hawaiian shirts. Those highlight a certain ignorance and a wrong image of what Salsa is about. So many times I was playing Salsa in a location decorated with Mexican sombreros and Brazilian flags.

Well, but talking again about the women-bands and the short pants... I think there are many ways of being sexy.

J.S. As a last question: Did the fact that you are a woman influence your career as a musician positively or negatively?

A.F. I think both. It's difficult.... I am not sure. Well, sometimes you get more calls because you are a woman. But it also depends on who is calling.

I never felt like: oh, if I wasn't a woman, I would have got this gig. Not really. If I look back, the job offers I got had more to do with me, as a person, and not especially as a woman.

But it is not the same for every instrument. Percussion is a whole different story for example.

I never felt like: oh they called me because I am a girl, but also never had the impression that I wasn't called because I am a girl. I started to get calls for concerts because musicians knew me. It has also to do with circles of friends. You first call the musicians being part of this circle if you need somebody for a gig.

I think that's it.

### **1.3 Interview May Peters, on August 3rd 2009 (translated from Dutch into English by the author)**

J.S. What was your motivation to start playing music?

M.P. I started when I was five years old. Limburg, where I am coming from, is famous for its rich tradition of fanfares. So it is natural then for children to take music lessons. At the beginning I wanted to play the trumpet but they didn't need any trumpet player in the fanfare. This is why I started with the cornet. I played it for four years.

After that period, I wanted to change to the trombone, but again, they didn't let me play it. The secretary of the fanfare spoke the legendary words: *Trombone? That's no instrument for a girl.* So, it was my father who finally bought me my first trombone.

J.S. And what did you study?

M.P. I studied the electronic organ at the conservatory in Maastricht. My teacher always encouraged me to keep on playing the trombone. At one point I joined the Big Band, which led to the decision to choose Trombone as a second major. After graduation some friends of mine continued their studies at the conservatory of Hilversum, and I took the decision to follow them to study Jazz trombone.

J.S. At how did you get in touch with Salsa music?

M.P. After graduating, an Antillean timbales player asked me to play in his band. Since I didn't understand a word they were talking and singing about I started taking Spanish lessons. After some classes I realized that the musicians didn't speak Spanish but Papiamentu, the language of the Antilles. With them I played Ritmo Kombina, Merengue, and not Salsa.

J.S. So it was rather a coincidence that you started with Salsa?

M.P. Well, like a neighbor in Puerto Rico told me once: There are no coincidences. It is destiny.

After the Antillean band I joined a Venezuelan band in Germany. There where I learned most of Salsa dura.

J.S. Did you listen to Salsa before that time?

M.P. Here in the Netherlands? No. I got my first Salsa cassette in 1991, which was one of Eddie Santiago. At that point I would have never imagined that three years later I would be playing in his band, with the original pieces.

Well, if you want something... But I have also been very lucky. Of course, you can never stop moving, and developing yourself.

J.S. Do you need to work harder being a woman?

M.P. I have never seen myself as a woman, until I went to Puerto Rico in 1994 where the men started flirting with me. It is there were people make the difference between men and women. I learned now to walk slower and in a more feminine way.

J.S. Why do you think women are less prominent in Salsa music?

M.P. I think that they don't chose a professional career because they might get married and become mothers. This of course keeps them away from studying regularly.

It can also depend on a woman's personality . I am really going after things I want, and never give up. This is due to my origins.... I am coming from a farmer family.

Education is playing also a major role in this phenomenon. Here in the West, we are richer, and have the chance to develop better than people in the Caribbean, who might not have the same possibilities because of financial problems.

J.S. Do they teach Popular music in Puerto Rico?

M.P. Right now the first students of the department of *Jazz and Musica Caribeña* graduated. They have an Afro-Caribbean band as well as a normal, traditional Jazz Big Band. To be accepted to this course you have to be capable of playing some Jazz tunes, but also Latin pieces...but mainly Latin Jazz. The Latin music is no problem for the students, since they have all learned this style of music on the street. It is a part of them. Nowadays there are also musicians coming from different countries to study in Puerto Rico.

J.S. Do female musicians have to deal with prejudices in Puerto Rico, or is this no issue at all?

M.P. Puerto Rico is full of prejudices. Men always see you as a woman; whether you are crossing the street with your trombone, or without. You are constantly dealing with comments such as *hepa guapa* (hey, beauty!). I was not at all used to this, since I am also homosexual. But this is the reality Latin American women are dealing with. But the moment I speak Spanish to those men, they start looking at me differently. And if I take out my trombone of its bag, ... Than I am accepted.

J.S. So at that moment they don't care anymore if you are a woman?

M.P. yes, than it doesn't matter at all. Except for the less educated boys and men. Especially with those men I always tried to get a connection with and to play music together. The most important aspect of music for me is sharing. Precisely the sharing and playing together is a big difficulty for those *machistas*, since they don't see women as equal partners.

But in the Top bands, this is not an issue at all. But of course, people always take notice of you.

J.S. So in the first place you are drawing the attention because you are a woman playing ... ..

M.P. Yes. Even more since I am playing the trombone, which is for them a sort of gun ... an aggressive instrument. I am now playing in a project Cuban boleros. This is

really sweet music. For Puerto Rican, this is really unusual. What I intend to do is to demonstrate the big variety of sounds you can produce with the trombone. In the end they actually really like it.

J.S. Thus the trombone is a really “masculine” instrument for the Puerto Ricans?

M.P. Yes. It is the most *macho* instrument for them. Even more than the trumpet. This is what I was told. I didn’t know that.

J.S. And how do people think about this here in Europe?

M.P. Well, here you have to deal with the problem that musicians, especially men, don’t think immediately about calling you if they need a trombone player. You are not one of the guys. First you have to become friends, and then you are part of their circle. This doesn’t have anything to do with *machismo* here. Networking is the key. Because of this closed male circles it is more difficult for female musicians to get the contacts and jobs.

J.S. Did you ever have the impression that people saw you first of all as a woman and only secondly as a musician?

M.P. Yes. Of course.

J.S. But did this influence your work?

M.P. I think that this has to do with culture. As a young girl I realized already that girls can’t do everything boys can do. And this always motivated me to keep on going and fighting for the things I wanted to do.

Well in Puerto Rico you have a lot of those differences: women don’t clean cars for example. I realized that everything that is normal to me is completely unusual for women in Puerto Rico. There you can see who is a Latina and who not. I can’t walk on high heels for example. Puerto Rican women also don’t cut their long hair. Their husbands would never allow this.

J.S. So the Puerto Ricans are still a really patriarchal society?

M.P. Yes, and you know what? The woman is the one that is taking the decisions in Puerto Rico. It is all part of a game.

J.S. Are you then considered as a role model at the conservatory?

M.P. Yes. And not only for girls, but also for boys. They also tell me: wow, I think you are so great, Maestra! They even tell me that they would enjoy having a mother like me. This is for me the reason to be there; being a role model. I always ask myself: where are all the women? Of course, as I said before, many of them disappear in marriage.

J.S. But are there many professional female musicians on the island?

M.P. *Amuni Nacer* is an excellent pianist. And *Brenda Hopkins* too. If you look at them you see that they are all very strong women. They are not the normal Latinas you meet in the streets, ... walking in high heels and having long hair. They are all busy with their own projects.

J.S. I was wondering about: Does Puerto Rico have all-women bands such as Colombia does for example?

M.P. No.

J.S. How does this come? Wouldn't they succeed in Puerto Rico, or do women not like the idea?

M.P. I think that it has to do with the producers. Colombia is a much bigger country than Puerto Rico. In Puerto Rico you have enough top bands, with which the producers are busy, so they don't think about creating an all-women band. And for example, I would not even know a female trumpet player.

The problem with Puerto Rico is also that most of the top musicians leave to go to New York. If you want to develop yourself, you don't stay on the island.

For example the first thing they told me when I arrived was: *what the hell are you coming to do on such a small island as Puerto Rico?*

But I feel like a missionary...

On the other hand, not talking about Salsa, you have a lot of *trovadoras*. For example *Victoria Sanabria*, which is playing *musica tipica*. She became, after competition fights with her own brothers, she became a real diva. But, she has a good male producer who is selling her.

J.S. Did you never want to become a vocalist?

M.P. Of course I did! During my studies in Maastricht I only had albums of Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan etc. I can sing, but don't have the voice to touch somebody with it. I sung background many times. And close harmony ...

One thing I wanted to say before. In Puerto Rico, music is business. And then, at the end you need a man as a producer.

J.S. Do you absolutely need a man for this?

M.P. yes, definitely. I agree with this 100%. It is perhaps a cliché, but it is true: it is a man's world. (laughs) I saw *La India* a while ago. She for example had in the beginning Eddie Palmieri, and then later Ralphie Mercado who were promoting her. If you don't have somebody like this, especially as a female singer, men don't take you seriously.

As a performer you are a product, which producers sell. And women would not succeed in doing this. Only maybe, if you are a real business shark.

The whole music business is manipulation on an emotional level. This is something men are just better in. For example also *Gloria Estefan*... she too had a man pushing her career.

And people in Puerto Rico also advised me not to fight with the producers. They like to talk a lot, the Latino producers.

J.S. Let's talk about one last thing; the image of Latina performers. Do they need to sell themselves as sexual objects?

M.P. (laughing) considering La India on her first album cover with the cigar ... I find it ridiculous.

If you observe Latinos you can see that a lot behave quite primitive if they see an attractive women. This is the reason why you have all those sexy album covers and billboards.

J.S. But is this because those sexy images reflect what men want to see, or is it because such images represent how Latinas are in reality?

M.P. Well, yes. I think that almost 80% of Latina women are around one hour per day busy with their physical appearance. You can find women almost looking like Geishas. And you find for example nail studios everywhere. And then of course the high heels... This is part of the culture.

J.S. So is this also the reason why Latina women are represented in such a sexy way? They just reflect the reality?

M.P. This is interesting....if you think of the black coast of Puerto Rico, there you don't see such covers. Thinking about this, it could be, that it has to do with the Spanish influence, which you don't find in the African culture. In *Bomba* and *Plena* music (the black music of Puerto Rico) the whole image is different then in Salsa. There you see women dancing with long dresses.

J.S. May, to finish let's take a look on your career. Did the fact that you are a woman influence your musical career in positive or negative way?

M.P. (begins to sing) *China, todo en la vida se paga* ... (China, everything in life you will pay for). Yes, you pay for everything in life. Now I have a producer who is helping me. But the nicest thing for me is to go and play and people enjoying it. Some people tell me that it helped me to get more jobs. I think it's counterbalanced.

J.S. Thanks a lot May. And thank you for your book.

M.P. You are welcome.





## 2 The female Grammy Winners

<b>Grammy Winner</b>	<b>Genre</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Titel</b>	<b>Performing Artist</b>
Celia Cruz, artist	Tropical	Salsa Performance	2000	Celia Cruz And Friends: A Night Of Salsa	Celia Cruz
Celia Cruz, artist. Jorge García, Mike Couzzi & Olga Santos, engineers/mixers. Oscar Gómez, producer.	Tropical	Traditional Tropical Album	2001	Siempre Viviré	Celia Cruz
Kike Santander, songwriter	Tropical	Tropical Song	2001	Jurame (Merengue)	Gisselle
Celia Cruz, artist. Jon Fausty & Mario deJesús, engineers/mixers. Sergio George, producer.	Tropical	Best Salsa Album	2002	La Negra tiene Tumbao	Celia Cruz
Olga Tañón, artist. Alfredo Matheus, Boris Milán, Eric Schilling, Hector Rosa, Rafael Lazzaro & Victor Lopez, engineers/mixers. Angel Peña, Eric Figueroa, Humberto Gatica & Manuel Tejada, producers.	Tropical	Best Merengue Album	2002	Yo Por Ti	Olga Tañón
Milly Quezada, artist.	Tropical	Best Merengue Album	2003	Pienso Así...	Milly Quezada
Celia Cruz, artist. Carlos Laurenz, Jake	Tropical	Best Salsa Album	2004	Regalo Del Alma	Celia Cruz

Tanner, Jon Fausty, Jorge García, Jorge Gómez, José Luis López, Luca Germini, Olga Santos & Oscar Gómez, engineers. Oscar Gómez & Sergio George, producers.					
Albita, artist. Paul Hoyle, engineer. Emilio Estefan Jr., producer.	Tropical	Best Contemporary Tropical Album	2004	Albita Llegó	Albita
Fernando Osorio & Sergio George, songwriters.	Tropical	Best Tropical Song	2004	Rie y Lloro	Celia Cruz
Milly Quezada, artist. José Hernández, engineer. Ramón Orlando, producer.	Tropical	Best Merengue Album	2006	MQ	Milly Quezada
Olga Tañón, artist. Eric Schilling & José Luis Morín A., engineers. José Luis Morín A., producer.	Tropical	Best Contemporary Tropical Album	2006	Una Nueva Mujer	Olga Tañón
Gloria Estefan, artist. Danny Ponce & Mike Couzzi, engineers. Emilio Estefan Jr., Eric Schilling & Gloria Estefan, engineers/mixers. Alberto Gaitan, Emilio Estefan Jr. & Ricardo Gaitan, producers.	Tropical	Best Traditional Tropical Album	2008	90 Millas	Gloria Estefan
Alberto Gaitan, Emilio Estefan Jr., Gloria Estefan & Ricardo Gaitan, songwriters.	Tropical	Best Tropical Song	2008	Píntame De Colores	Gloria Estefan

Maria Rita, artist.	General Field	Best New Artist	2004	Maria Rita	Maria Rita
Alejandro Sanz & Shakira, artists. Gustavo Celis, Kevin Killen & Rob Jacobs, engineers/mixers. Léster Méndez & Shakira, producers.	General Field	Record Of The Year	2006	La Tortura	Shakira Featuring Alejandro Sanz
Shakira, artist. Dave Way, Gustavo Celis, Kevin Killen, Mauricio Guerrero, Rob Jacobs & Serban Ghenea, engineers/mixers. Vlado Meller, mastering engineer. Gustavo Cerati, Luis F. Ochoa, Léster Méndez & Shakira, producers.	General Field	Album Of The Year	2006	Fijación Oral Vol. 1	Shakira
Luis F. Ochoa & Shakira, songwriters.	General Field	Song Of The Year	2006	La Tortura	Shakira Featuring Alejandro Sanz
Kany García, artist.	General Field	Best New Artist	2008	Cualquier Día	Kany García
Gloria Estefan, artist. Emilio Estefan Jr. & Gloria Estefan, video directors. Douglas Friedman, video producer.	Music Video	Music Video	2000	No Me Dejes De Querer	Gloria Estefan
Shakira, artist. Francis Lawrence, video director. Tim Kerrison, video producer.	Music Video	Best Music Video (1 song)	2002	Suerte	Shakira

Julieta Venegas, artist. Milton Lage, video director. José Tillán & Michael Dagnery, video producers.	Music Video	Best Long Form Music Video	2008	MTV Unplugged	Julieta Venegas
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In the category of Pop, the academy separated female and male vocalists.

(<http://www.grammy.com/Latin>)

### 3 Online survey

#### Questionnaire

This set of questions is addressed to female Salsa listeners. Relevant for my research is that you have knowledge of the Spanish language.

For my master thesis at the University of Amsterdam, I will do research on the role of women in Salsa. Please feel free to contact me via email (salseras2009@hotmail.com) if you are interested in knowing more about my thesis or if you want to add personal comments. I am also willing to send you a copy of my thesis after completion. Please let me know whether you are interested in getting a complete version of my research and the outcomes.

When one of my choices I offered is not representing your opinion, please choose the field *other*. Feel free to specify if you want to; however, this is optional. If some of the questions on the first page are too personal, just leave the corresponding fields free.

Thank you for your collaboration,  
Jeanne Schmartz

#### What is your age?

- Under 20
- Between 20-30
- Between 30-40
- Between 40-50
- Above 50

#### Nationality:

- European, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- South American, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- North American, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- African, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Asian, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Australian, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

#### Where do you live?

- Europe, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- South America, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- North America, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Africa, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Asia, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Australia, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

#### Status:

- Single
- In a partnership

- Married
- Widow

**What is your favorite Latin music genre?**

- Salsa
- Bachata
- Merengue
- Reggaeton
- Bolero
- Latin pop
- Latin Rock
- Tumba
- Other, \_\_\_\_\_

**What do you like the most about that genre?**

- The lyrics
- The melodies
- The rhythm
- Its cultural meaning
- The link to home
- Other, \_\_\_\_\_

**Are you formally trained in music?**

- Yes
- No

**Did you grow up as a child with Salsa music?**

- Yes
- No

**What is for you the most important feature about Salsa music?**

- Lyrics
- Melodies
- Rhythm
- Dance ability
- Socio-political message
- Other, \_\_\_\_\_

**Who is your favorite Salsa artist/band?**

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**Do you listen to all-women Salsa bands?**

- Yes
- No

**Which Salsa band formation do you prefer?**

- All-women bands
- The “standard”, mixed band
- It does not matter, what matters is the music
- Not applicable

**Do you know *La India*?**

- Yes
- No

**Do you like her music style?**

- Yes, because \_\_\_\_\_ (optional)
- No, because \_\_\_\_\_ (optional)
- Not applicable

**Do you like her image?**

- Yes, because \_\_\_\_\_ (optional)
- No, because \_\_\_\_\_ (optional)
- Not applicable

**Would you like to see more female musicians playing in Salsa bands?**

- Yes
- No
- I do not care

**Do you listen more to Salsa romantica or Salsa dura?**

- Salsa romantica
- Salsa dura
- Both, the style does not matter, what matters is the song and/or the artist
- I do not know

**Do you prefer male or female singers?**

- Male
- Female
- It does not matter, what matters is the song

## What do you think about this cover?



- To see a nice-formed body is an inspiration
- It shows me the newest fashion
- I learn about what men want their girlfriends to look like, and I use it for finding a man
- I reject such sexist covers
- I do not care, what matters is the music
- Other, \_\_\_\_\_

## What do you feel when reading those lyrics?

Pau, pau, pau,  
te voy a dar  
te voy a dar una pela.  
Si te tiro por la ventana  
te subes por la escalera.

~

Ay vete, vete paquetera.  
Me buscaste los bolsillos  
me tumbaste la cartera.  
Y esa va a ser la razon.  
porque te voy a pegar.  
Y caeras sobre la arena.  
Anda y vete ya mi amor.  
Si no te quiero sigue tranquila.  
No perturbes mas mi vida.  
O te vo'a morder la oreja.

- I do not care, for me lyrics are not important
- I am shocked
- I do not take it serious
- I know that I am not this kind of woman, and this is why I do not mind
- He is singing about a bad experience, and is exaggerating
- Other, \_\_\_\_\_



**How do you in general react to women-discriminating lyrics?**

- I only listen to female Salsa artists, because they do not discriminate women
- I will not listen to this particular song anymore
- I reject this particular song, and all others from the same artist
- I do not take them serious
- I do not listen to the lyrics of a song
- Other, \_\_\_\_\_

Thanks a lot for your time and willingness to participate in this research.  
I really appreciate it.

**Cuestionario**

Este cuestionario se dirige al publico femenino que escucha Salsa.

Debido a la tesis de mi master en la Universidad de Amsterdam, investigaré sobre el rol de las mujeres en el mundo de la Salsa. Por favor no dude en contactame si quiere saber mas sobre la investigación o anadir comentarios personales. Puede dirigirse a mi en la siguiente direccion de correo electronico: [salseras2009@hotmail.com](mailto:salseras2009@hotmail.com). Una copia de mi tesis una vez publicada y de los resultados del cuestionario le serán también enviados en caso de así solicitarlo.

Si al responder al cuestionario, su opinión o caso no están representados por favor escoja la casilla *otro*. Si por consiguiente quiere especificar; será apreciado. Si useted siente que algunas de las preguntas de la primera pagina son demasiado personales, no se sienta obligada a responderlas. Simplemente deje la casilla sin responder.

Muchas gracias por su colaboración,  
Jeanne Schmartz

**Que edad tiene?**

- Menos de 20
- Entre 20-30
- Entre 30-40
- Entre 40-50
- Mas de 50

**Nacionalidad:**

- Europea, por favor especifique \_\_\_\_\_
- Sur Americana, por favor especifique \_\_\_\_\_
- Norte Americana, por favor especifique \_\_\_\_\_
- Africana, por favor especifique \_\_\_\_\_
- Asiática, por favor especifique \_\_\_\_\_
- Australiana, por favor especifique \_\_\_\_\_

**Donde vive?**

- Europa, por favor especifique \_\_\_\_\_
- Sur América, por favor especifique \_\_\_\_\_
- Norte América, por favor especifique \_\_\_\_\_
- Africa, por favor especifique \_\_\_\_\_
- Asia, por favor especifique \_\_\_\_\_
- Australia, por favor especifique \_\_\_\_\_

**Estado civil:**

- soltera
- en una relación
- casada
- viuda

**Cual es su estilo predilecto de música Latina ?**

- Salsa
- Bachata
- Merengue
- Reggaeton
- Bolero
- Pop latino
- Rock latino
- Tumba
- otro: \_\_\_\_\_

**Que es lo que le gusta mas de este estilo?**

- Las letras
- Las melodias
- El ritmo
- El significado
- Recuerdos de su país de origen
- Otro: \_\_\_\_\_

**Recibió usted educación musical?**

- Si
- No

**Creció usted escuchando Salsa?**

- Si
- No

**Cual es el elemento mas importante en la Salsa para usted?**

- Las letras
- Las melodias
- El ritmo

- El baile
- El mensaje politico-social
- Otro: \_\_\_\_\_

**Cual es su artista o grupo de Salsa favorito?**

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**Escucha usted grupos de Salsa que sean únicamente femeninos ?**

- Si
- No

**Que grupos de salsa prefiere?**

- Solo formados por mujeres
- De formación habitual
- No lo considera relevante, lo importante es la música
- No aplicable

**Conoce usted *La India*?**

- Si
- No

**Le gusta su estilo musical?**

- Si porque \_\_\_\_\_ (opcional)
- No porque \_\_\_\_\_ (opcional)
- No aplicable

**Le gusta su imagen?**

- Si porque \_\_\_\_\_ (opcional)
- No porque \_\_\_\_\_ (opcional)
- No aplicable

**Le gustaría encontrar mas mujeres tocando Salsa?**

- SI
- No
- No tengo preferencia

### Escucha usted mas salsa romántica o salsa dura?

- Salsa romántica
- Salsa dura
- Los dos, el estilo no me importa lo que me importa es la canción y/o el artista
- No lo se

### Prefiere usted cantantes masculinos o femeninos?

- Masculinos
- Femeninos
- No me importa lo que me importa es la canción

### Que opina usted de la presentación de este álbum?



- Ver un cuerpo bonito es una inspiración
- Me muestra la ultima moda
- Me doy cuenta de como los hombres quieren ver a las mujeres y lo utilizo para encontrar uno
- Estoy en contra de presentaciones tan sexistas
- No me importa lo que me importa es la musica
- Otro

### Que opina usted al leer estas letras?

Pau, pau, pau,  
te voy a dar  
te voy a dar una pela.  
Si te tiro por la ventana  
te subes por la escalera.

~

Ay vete, vete paquetera.  
Me buscaste los bolsillos  
me tumbaste la cartera.  
Y esa va a ser la razon.

porque te voy a pegar.  
Y caerás sobre la arena.  
Anda y vete ya mi amor.  
Si no te quiero sigue tranquila.  
No perturbes más mi vida.  
O te voy a morder la oreja.

- No me importa, para mí las letras no son importantes
- Me asusto
- No me lo tomo en serio
- Se que no soy este tipo de mujer y por eso no me importa
- Canta sobre una mala experiencia y exagera
- Otro, \_\_\_\_\_

**Como reacciona usted en general hacia letras que discriminan a la mujer?**

- Solo escucho artistas femeninas, porque ellas no discriminan a la mujer
- No escucharé más esta canción en particular
- Rechazo esta canción en particular y todas las otras del mismo autor
- No me las tomo en serio
- No escucho las letras de las canciones
- Otro, \_\_\_\_\_

Muchas gracias por su tiempo y dedicación en esta investigación.  
Aprecio mucho su colaboración

## Results:

### Age:

/ : 2,43 %  
under 20: 2,43 %  
between 20-30: 39,02%  
between 30-40: 31, 70%  
between 40-50: 7,31%  
over 50: 17,07%

### Nationality:

Spanish: 9,75%  
Colombian: 17,07%  
Polish: 2,43 %  
Luxemburgish: 4,87%  
Cuban: 2,43 %  
Venezuelan: 7,31%  
American: 7,31%  
Dutch: 24,39%  
German: 2,43 %  
Uruguayan: 2,43 %  
Peruvian: 7,31%  
Russian: 2,43 %  
Nuyorican: 4,87%  
French: 2,43 %  
Mexican: 2,43 %

Latin American: 43,90%  
European, American and Russian:  
56,09%

### Residence:

Spain: 2,43%  
Netherlands: 46,34%  
Colombia: 14,63%  
Luxembourg: 7,31%  
United States: 14,63%  
Belgium: 2,43%  
Switzerland: 2,43%  
Peru: 7,31%  
Germany: 2,43%

### Status:

/ : 4,87%  
single: 36, 58%  
in a relationship: 43,90%  
married: 9,75%  
divorced: 4,87%  
widow: 0%

### **Favorite music style:**

Salsa: 34,14%  
Salsa and Merengue: 9,75%  
Salsa and Bolero: 7, 31%  
Salsa, Merengue and Pop latino: 4,87%  
Salsa and Argentinean Tango: 4,87%  
Salsa and Latin Jazz: 2,43%  
Salsa, Merengue, Pop latino and Rock Latino: 2,43%  
Salsa and Rock latino: 2,43%  
Salsa and Tumba: 2,43%  
Salsa and Timba: 2,43%  
Salsa, Merengue and Pop latino: 2,43%  
Salsa, Bachata, Merengue, Reggaeton, Bolero, Pop latino and Tumba: 2,43%  
Salsa, Bachata and Reggaeton: 2,43%  
Afro-Cuban: 2,43%  
Folklore: 2,43%  
Merengue: 2,43%  
Merengue and Pop latino: 2,43%  
Bachata, Merengue, Reggaeton, Pop latino and Rock latino: 2,43%  
Bachata: 2,43%  
Reggaeton: 2,43%  
Latin Jazz: 2,43%

### **What do you like most about this style?**

The rhythm: 39,02%  
The lyrics and the rhythm: 9,75%  
The rhythm and the melodies: 7, 31%  
The lyrics and the melodies: 4,87%  
The rhythm and other: 2,43%  
The rhythm and its cultural meaning: 2,43%  
The lyrics, the melodies, the rhythm and its cultural meaning: 2,43%  
The lyrics, the melodies, the rhythm, the link to home and other: 2,43%  
The lyrics, the melodies, the rhythm, its cultural meaning, the link to home and other: 2,43%  
The lyrics, the melodies and the rhythm: 2,43%  
The melodies, the rhythm and its cultural meaning: 2,43%  
The link to home: 2,43%  
Its cultural meaning: 2,43%  
The melodies, the rhythm, its cultural meaning: 2,43%  
Just about everything, sometimes lyrics are bit silly: 2,43%  
The way it moves me, it resonates deeply: 2,43%  
The rhythm and the remark: everytime you play a song, it can be the best time: 2,43%  
Dancing it: 2,43%  
/: 2,43%

### **Are you formally trained in music?**

Yes: 58,53% No: 39,02% /: 2,43%

### Did you grow up as a child with Salsa music?

Yes: 41,46% No: 58,53%

### What is for you the most important feature about Salsa music?

The rhythm: 36,58%

Its dance ability: 17,07%

The rhythm and its dance ability: 12,19%

The rhythm and the melodies: 4,87%

The rhythm, the lyrics and the melodies: 4,87%

The melodies: 4,87%

The Lyrics, the melodies, the rhythm, its dance ability and the socio-political message: 4,87%

The rhythm, the lyrics and its dance ability: 4,87

The rhythm, the melodies and its dance ability: 4,87%

The rhythm, the lyrics, the socio-political message and its dance ability: 2,43%

The rhythm and the socio-political message: 2,43%

### Who is your favorite Salsa artist/band? (starting with the most prominent artist)

Marc Anthony

Ruben Blades

El Isaac Delgado

Grupo Niche

Gilberto Santa Rosa

**Celia Cruz**

Los Van Van

Gran Combo de Puerto Rico

Sonora Ponceña

Hector Lavoe

**La India**

Oscar d'Leon

Manny Oquendo y Libre

Adalberto Alvarez

Eddie Palmieri

Ray Barretto

Tito Nieves

Tito Rojas

Victor Manuelle

Melo Ruiz

Ismael Rivera

Cacaho

Guaco

Pupy y Los que Son

Klimax

New York Latin;Jazz bands

Charanga bands

La ritmo oriental

La Charanga Habanera

Elio Reve

Son de Cali

**Bamboleo \***

**Haila Mompie**

Willie Colon

Cristol

Buena Vista Social Club

\* With two female singers



**Do you listen to all-women Salsa bands?**

Yes: 34,14% No: 63,41% / : 2,43%

**Which Salsa band formation do you prefer?**

It doesn't matter: 85,36%  
The "standard" mixed band: 9,75%  
All-women bands: 2,43%  
/ : 2,43%

**Do you know *La India*?**

Yes: 68,29%  
No: 31,70%

**Do you like her music style?**

Yes: 57,14%  
No: 42,85%

**Do you like her image?**

Yes: 42,85 %  
No: 46,42%

This question knew some false answers (10,73%)

**Would you like to see more female musicians playing in Salsa bands?**

Yes: 63,41%  
I do not care: 34,14%  
/ : 2,43

**Do you listen more to Salsa romantica or Salsa dura?**

Both, the style does not matter, what matters is the song and/or the artist : 41,46%  
Salsa Dura: 36,58%  
Salsa Romantica: 12,19%  
I do not know: 4,87%  
/ : 4,87%

**Do you prefer male or female singers?**

It does not matter, what matters is the song : 80,48%  
Male singers: 17,07%  
Female singers: 2,43%

## What do you think about this cover?



I reject such sexist covers: 41,46%

I do not care, what matters is the music: 26,82%

Other: 24,39%

It shows me the newest fashion: 2,43%

I learn about what men want their girlfriends to look like, and I use it for finding a man: 2,43%

To see a nice-formed body is an inspiration: 2,43%

## What do you feel when reading those lyrics?

*Pau, pau, pau,  
te voy a dar  
te voy a dar una pela.  
Si te tiro por la ventana  
te subes por la escalera.*

~

*Ay vete, vete paquetera.  
Me buscaste los bolsillos  
me tumbaste la cartera.  
Y esa va a ser la razon.  
porque te voy a pegar.  
Y caerás sobre la arena.  
Anda y vete ya mi amor.  
Si no te quiero sigue tranquila.  
No perturbes mas mi vida.  
O te vo'a morder la oreja.*

I do not take it serious: 39,02%

Other: 26,82%

I am shocked: 19,51%

I know that I am not this kind of woman, and this is why I do not mind: 7,31%

He is singing about a bad experience, and is exaggerating: 4,87%

I do not care, for me lyrics are not important: 2,43%

**How do you in general react to women-discriminating lyrics?**

I do not take them serious: 31,70%

Other: 21,95%

I reject this particular song, and all others from the same artist: 19,52%

I will not listen to this particular song anymore: 14,63%

I do not listen to the lyrics of a song: 7,31%

I only listen to female Salsa artists, because they do not discriminate women: 4,87%

#### 4 Table with the songs of the Feria de Cali

YEAR	SONG TITLE	ARTIST	GENRE
1958	<i>Palo bonito</i>	Orquesta de las Americas canta Lita Nelson	Merengue
1959	<i>La estereofonica</i>	Orquesta de Manuel Villanueva	Cumbia
1960	<i>Quiero amanecer</i>	?	Porro
1961	<i>La Pollera colora</i>	Wilson Chaparera qith Orquesta de Pedro Salsedo	Cumbia
1962	<b><i>La Negra Celina</i></b>	Orquesta de Cristobal Perez	Cumbia
1963	<i>Festival en Guarare</i>	Corraleros del Majagual	Porro
1964	<i>Guepa je</i>	Rosco Garces	Cumbia
1965	<i>Los aparates</i>	Calixto Ochoa	?
1966	<i>La banda borracha</i>	Alfredo Gutierrez	Porro
1967	<i>La burrita del deseo</i>	Coraleros del Majagual	Parranda Navideña
1968	<i>La Piragua</i>	?	Cumbia
1969	<i>La feria de Cali</i>	Los daughter boys	Porro
1970	<i>Ave pa've</i>	Take stars	Porro
1971	<i>Mi Cali bella</i>	Billos Caracas Boys	Porro
1972	<i>Enterrador</i>	?	Porro
1973	<i>Pedacito de mi Vida</i>	Celina y Reutilio	Trova Campesina (cubana)
1974	<i>A la memoria del muerto</i>	Fruko y sus Tesos canta Piper Pimienta	Porro
1975	<i>Estas pillá'o</i>	Lisandro Meza	Porro
1976	<b><i>Las Caleñas son como las flores</i></b>	Piper Pimienta	Salsa
1977	<i>Amaneciendo</i>	Adolfo Echaverria	Porro
1978	<i>El Polvorete</i>	Lisandro Meza	Parranda
1979	<b><i>Las Caleñas</i></b>	Pastor Lopez	Porro
1980	<b><i>Dos mujeres</i></b>	Alfredo Gutierrez	Porro
1981	<i>A mover la colita</i>	Sonora Dinamita	Porro
1982	<i>Esperanza</i>	Los Tupamaros	Bambuco
1983	<i>La Matica</i>	Lisandro Meza	Parranda Navideña
1984	<i>Cali Pachanguero</i>	Grupo Niche	Salsa
1985	<i>Sobre las olas</i>	Latin brothers	Porro
1986	<b><i>Juanita Ae</i></b>	La misma Gente	Salsa

1987	<b>Mujeres</b>	Orchestra La identidad	Salsa
1988	<i>Aguita de Coco</i>	Fantasma del Caribe	Ritmo tropical
1989	<i>El gran Leon</i>	Vargas Bill	Parranda Navideña
1990	<b>La Bella</b>	Lisandro Meza	Parranda Navideña
1991	<i>Oiga Mire Vea</i>	Orquesta Guayacan	Salsa
1992	<i>Caleño</i>	Orquesta Son de Azúcar	Salsa
1993	<i>La gota fria</i>	Carlos Vives	Vallenato
1994	<i>El santo Cachon</i>	Embajadores Vallenatos	Vallenato
1995	<i>Farolito</i>	Gloria Estefan	Bambuco
1996	<i>La canoa rancha</i>	Grupo Niche	Cumbia
1997	<i>Caballito</i>	Carlos Vives	Chande
1998	<i>La vida es un Carnaval</i>	Celia Cruz	Salsa
1999	<i>Han cogido la cosa</i>	Grupo Niche	Salsa
2000	<i>Tu Cariñito</i>	Puerto Rican Power	Salsa
2001	<i>El hijo de Tuta</i>	Lisandro Meza	Porro
2002	<i>Que Borrachera</i>	Orquesta Canela	Parranda Reggaeton
2003	<i>No se apula</i>	Lisandro Meza	Porro
2004	<i>La camisa negra</i>	Juanes	Techno Cumbia
2005	<i>Quando hablan las miradas</i>	Orquesta Guayacan	Salsa
2006	<i>Pa'l año que viene</i>	Son de Cali	Porro Salsa
2007	<i>Esta Vida</i>	Jorge Celedon	Vallenato
2008	<i>Mejor Solito</i>	Jhonny Rivera	Raspa

Variations:

2000: *La Vamo'a tumbar* from the band Orquesta Saboreo ([www.feriadecali.com](http://www.feriadecali.com))

2001: *El mujeriego* de la Orquesta Canela ([www.orquestacanela.com](http://www.orquestacanela.com))

2007: Salsa hit: Guayacan with *Cambiare por ti* (Federico Arboleda, personal communication on August 17<sup>th</sup> 2009)

(Show at the *Teatro Municipal de Cali* in 2006. Video on YouTube, <http://www.co.terra.com/carnaval2008/interna/0,,OI2234593-EI10995,00.html>  
<http://www.feriadecali.com>, Federico Arboleda, personal communication on August 17<sup>th</sup> 2009)