

Introduction

People often believe that a musical phenomenon, such as a particular genre, musical instrument, or song repertoire, captures the essence of a country's national character. Think of the Paraguayan harp, the Trinidadian steelband, the Brazilian samba, the Argentine tango, and the Dominican merengue as just a few examples of this in Latin America and the Caribbean. In its adoption of the term *música nacional* (national music), Ecuador is unusually frank in its acknowledgment of the link between a musical symbol and ideas about nationhood. During my sojourn in Ecuador from November 2001 to October 2004, and also as an Ecuadorian citizen who grew up in Ecuador singing and listening to *pasillos* in serenades, at high school, and on the radio, I came to realize that Ecuadorian people do not normally use the phrase “Ecuadorian music” to designate music of Ecuadorian origin; instead, they use the phrase “*música nacional*.” This term cannot be generically translated into English as “national music”; rather, it is an expression that has been used in Ecuador as an umbrella term for a specific repertoire of urban popular songs composed between the 1920s and 1950s. This repertoire consists especially of *pasillos*, a song type the elites have elevated to national status. Since the 1990s, however, the popular classes have been using the same phrase—*música nacional*—to refer to a broader repertoire of songs the elites pejoratively call *chichera* music (an urban popular music associated with indigenous people) and *rocolera* music (a working-class music related not to rock music but to the *rocola*, drunkenness, and unrequited love).¹ For the

popular classes, these styles, not the *pasillos* preferred by the elite, embody the sounds of the nation and what it means for them to be Ecuadorian.

The focal point of this book is to understand what kinds of music Ecuadorians from different walks of life call *música nacional*, why there are disparities between different social groups in terms of how they use this term, and what the ramifications of these differences are. The term *música nacional* has varying definitions according to the socioeconomic, ethnic, racial, and generational background of the individuals doing the identifying. I argue that Ecuadorians' attitudes toward the music they identify as *música nacional* are symptomatic of their outlook on the nation and on conationals. The inclusion or exclusion within the scope of this term of musical genres and styles associated with the white, mestizo, indigenous, and Afro-Ecuadorian populations reveals how different social groups envision the ethnic and racial configuration of the nation. No previous study of Ecuadorian popular music (EPM) has focused on this double usage because using this phrase to pinpoint different styles of music perceived as embodying the feelings for the nation has become a common and unnoticed habit that is deeply ingrained in social practice. For analytical purposes, throughout this book I will use the terms "elite *música nacional*" and "working-class *música nacional*" to distinguish the two usages. It must be noted that Ecuadorians do not make this distinction and simply use the term *música nacional* to refer to both types of musics.

This book explores the ideas that people have about themselves and their nations. More specifically, it examines Ecuadorians' perceptions of their national identity in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, particularly between 1960 and 2004, and how such perceptions are conspicuous in the production, circulation, and consumption of *música nacional*. Ecuador, like other Latin American countries, has a long history of racial and cultural miscegenation as a result of the encounter of Europeans, Amerindians, and Africans in the colonial period, which has given rise to the popular saying, "El que no tiene de inga, tiene de mandinga" (The person who does not have indigenous blood [*inga*] has African blood [*mandinga*]). Although "mixture" has been the norm in the demographics and cultural scene of Latin America, the trend among upper-middle-class mestizos has been to self-identify as "white" (of European ancestry) and to deny their indigenous and/or African heritage. "Whiteness," in this case, has less to do with race than with social distinction and socioeconomic status among mestizos, which are features used as a means to build social boundaries between upper-middle-class mestizos (white-mestizos) and lower-class mestizos (hereafter called mestizos).

The elite construction of Ecuadorian national identity has been molded by the ideology of *mestizaje* (mixed ancestry), a nation-building discourse that

celebrates the racial and cultural mixing of indigenous and white people, yet is exclusionist of the nonmixed populations, that is, indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian people (Whitten 1981). This vision of *mestizaje* seeks to integrate Ecuador's multiethnic population into a discursive national unity by homogenizing their cultural practices through the adoption of urban lifestyles and the cultural features of the dominant sectors (white-mestizos), such as the Spanish language, customs, and dress. However, mestizo groups in Ecuador are anything but homogeneous. As with all hybrid identities, it is important to analyze the power relations at play between the ethnic groups involved in the mixture because the perception and level of acceptance of the cultural mixture will vary if the components are not equally valued (Roitman 2009). In Ecuador's case, the indigenous culture has historically been devalued, while "whiteness" (becoming urban and modern) has been overpriced and esteemed as the ultimate goal of *mestizaje*.

Although Ecuadorians' view of indigenous culture has been changing since the rise of indigenous social movements in the 1990s and their active participation in Ecuadorian politics, the evaluation of indigenous people continues to be undervalued.² The "archaeological" Indians from the precolonial period are recognized as valiant people who courageously fought against the Spanish conquistadors, but contemporary common Indians are neglected and marginalized. Social scientists distinguish an indigenous intellectual elite and the Otavalan merchants who are in a better-off position from the common indigenous people to whom I refer as a marginal group. The government recognizes the legitimacy of indigenous culture as expressed in the 1998 Constitution, which declares Ecuador a pluricultural and multiethnic nation. Indigenous children, for example, are able to study in Quichua in elementary school, and a "multilingual" version of the national anthem has been recorded and is aired on television state programs.³ However, official recognition does not necessarily equate with acceptance from the general population.

In her study of the upper classes in Ecuador, Roitman notes that *mestizaje* in Ecuador has been examined mainly as a process of *blanqueamiento* (whitening), which looks at how indigenous people strive to become whites in order to climb the social ladder and gain access to privileges denied to indigenous people. Because mestizos are generally perceived as a homogeneous group, ethnic and racial tensions among mestizos of different socioeconomic levels have been overlooked and left unquestioned. Roitman also states that studies of *mestizaje* in Ecuador rarely focus on the hybrid identity of the upper-middle classes because "'mestizo' became colloquially understood as a label for those who were 'no longer Indians,' [and] the Criollo 'elites' while theoretically mestizos, were not placed in the ethnic structure since they were not directly linked to an Indigenous past" (2009, 2).

As a hybrid-identity discourse, *mestizaje* is “an extensive construct that permits much variety within it” because any ethnic group, regardless of their socioeconomic, cultural, and physical disparities, can “in theory” become or claim to be mestizo (Roitman 2009, 4). This malleable concept of *mestizaje* presupposes the possibility of ethnic identity change and is symptomatic of the social differences, antagonisms, and hierarchical levels that upper-, middle-, and lower-class mestizos establish among themselves. Ecuadorians and social scientists use a variety of ethnic labels to refer to this ethnic and cultural mixture, such as *white-mestizo* (upper- and upper-middle-class mestizo), *mestizo* (lower- and lower-middle-class mestizo), *mishi* (Quichua term for mestizo, used by indigenous people), and *cholo* and *longo* (terms indicating various degrees of assimilation of indigenous and mestizo people from the rural areas to urban culture). The terms *cholo* and *longo* are pejorative and often used by the upper-middle classes as insults for urban mestizos who have notable indigenous features and try to escalate the social ladder.⁴ According to Roitman, these ethnic labels have been examined more as indicators of a change in socioeconomic status than as a change in ethnic identity, or expressions of a subtle racism among and within mestizos (2009, 4–5).

Ethnic and racial tensions are also revealed in the labels upper-middle-class Ecuadorians use to disparage EPM associated with indigenous people and lower-class mestizos assimilated to the cities. A central argument of this book is that upper-middle-class Ecuadorians (*white-mestizos*) do not acknowledge the indigenous heritage of their mestizo identity, an attitude symbolically observed in the stereotypes and labels they use to refer to mestizo working-class musics. I argue that labels such as *chichera* and *rocolera* music pinpoint the existing ethnic and racial tensions among and within mestizo groups and have pejorative connotations similar to those of *longo* and *cholo*. The label *música nacional*, which designates the music cultivated by upper-middle-class Ecuadorians, underscores the social hierarchies between *white-mestizos* and lower-class mestizos, that is, the *cholos* and *longos*. It is important to note that the terms *chichera* and *rocolera* have been assigned from above as the popular classes do not normally refer to their music as such.

Identifying what kinds of repertoires Ecuadorians from different walks of life identify as *música nacional* is as complex as determining who a mestizo person is. Mestizeness is a highly relational concept defined conjuncturally according to who does the identifying and who is being identified. Likewise, the definition of *música nacional* is highly situational and will depend on the types of songs in question and who the people who produce and listen to them are. I argue that elite *música nacional* is the musical embodiment of the ideology of *mestizaje* as *blanqueamiento*. Elite *música nacional* “whitens” the indigenous features and accentuates the European component in the musical

mixture through stylization of the lyrics, musical arrangements, and singing style, whereas working-class *música nacional* (that is, *chichera* and *rocolera* music) is the expression of a type of *mestizaje* where the indigenous elements are made more obvious. Manuel Espinosa Apolo calls this process “mestizaje as cholificación” (2003).⁵ As a result, for the elites the elite *música nacional* repertoire is considered the Ecuadorian music par excellence, while *chichera* and *rocolera* music are unclassified and simply regarded as *música del pueblo* (people’s music).

I view *música nacional* as a metaphor for Ecuadorian national identity. According to Samuels, “Metaphors assert an identity between things that at a basic referential level are different” and thus “open the possibility for proliferation of meaning” (2004, 9). It is this capacity for music to convey a multiplicity of meanings that I analyze in the elite and working-class constructions of *música nacional*. We must bear in mind, however, that these constructs representing different visions of the nation are not mutually exclusive because the elites need to keep their positions of power and distinguish themselves from the people they outwardly claim to be “equal” citizens (Wade 2000). Rather than pointing to a singular and homogenous national identity, I focus instead on the coexistence of multiple expressions of national identity, which represent different interests, aesthetics, and social groups vying for national representation in a multicultural nation such as Ecuador.

The Intimacy of the Nation

In Ecuador, the elites seem to be connected to the nation by a “shameful identity” (*identidad vergonzosa*), as evidenced by their tendency to disparage their popular culture and the products made in Ecuador. These negative views, which are commonly expressed in criticisms of and disdain for *rocolera* and *chichera* music, are not normally talked about with nonnationals because they exist within a private sphere, a kind of dirty laundry only to be aired within the “cultural intimacy” (Herzfeld 1997) of the nation.⁶

This book examines negative self-stereotypes with which Ecuadorians identify and express their denial of their national identity’s indigenous heritage. Ecuadorians, like nationals of other countries, usually describe themselves as nice, cheerful, and hospitable people who are proud of their country. However, they also point out negative aspects of their national character. Writer Jorgenrique Adoum, for example, calls attention to Ecuadorians’ “particular traits” (*señas particulares*) and pinpoints the existence of a negative national identity, reflected in an “inferiority complex” and a devalued image of Ecuadorians: “The Ecuadorian citizen, in general . . . adopts from the outset a defeatist attitude, almost servile, of ‘Indian’ or ‘longo’ when abroad, or

when confronted by someone whom he or she perceives to be superior based on his/her nationality, position, income” (2000, 46).

In Ecuador, one can frequently hear discourses in the media about Ecuadorians’ “inferiority complex” and low self-esteem, which make them place higher value on foreign products and cultural expressions than on those of their own country. Several marketing campaigns, with slogans such as “Elige siempre lo nuestro” (Always choose our products) and “Dile sí al producto nacional” (Say yes to national products), were conceived in the early 2000s with the aim of encouraging consumption of Ecuadorian goods and changing people’s attitude toward them. Although both campaigns advocated the consumption of such products as a way to generate employment, stimulate the economy, and reduce the escalating rates of international migration (Ortiz 2003, 38), these marketing strategies also played on a perceived sense of inferiority, putting a positive spin on this reference point for mutual recognition among Ecuadorians.

Upper-middle-class Ecuadorians often complain about Ecuador’s popular music not being known on the international stage.⁷ Social critic Agustín Cueva puts it bluntly: “Latin American popular music has been successful in the entire world. Ecuadorian music, however, is the exception” (Donoso 2000, 56). Upper-middle-class Ecuadorians have taken the fact that Ecuadorian music is little known outside Ecuador as symptomatic of Ecuador not having a national identity. Writer Miguel Donoso Pareja, for example, affirms that Ecuador lacks a popular music that integrates and identifies its people in the same way that the cumbia, the samba, and the tango do in Colombia, Brazil, and Argentina, respectively. For him, “the only musical identification Ecuadorians have is the suffering, lamentations, weeping, drunkenness and the heartbreak of unrequited love affairs,” which indicates “a negative, self-commiserating, and castrating identity” (Donoso 2000, 56). Many upper-middle-class Ecuadorians I spoke to in Quito and Guayaquil formulated similar value judgments, albeit in a more subtle manner. However, it must be noted that Ecuador is not the only Latin American country whose popular music is little known in the international sphere. One could even argue that Brazil and Cuba are the exceptions, rather than the rule, in terms of having their popular musics known internationally.

In addition, Donoso states that Ecuador does not have a national drink that identifies it internationally as the *caipirinha* in Brazil and the *mojito* in Cuba do. He points out that while in Ecuador it is possible to eat Mexican tacos, Argentine *parilladas*, and Chilean *empanadas*, Ecuadorian typical dishes are unknown even in the border cities of Ipiales in Colombia and Aguas Verdes in Peru. Finally, Donoso reminds us that even the famous handwoven straw hat from Ecuador is internationally known as the “Panama hat”!⁸

For intellectuals such as Donoso, Ecuadorian national identity is defined by international recognition (the gaze of the “Other”) rather than by Ecuadorians’ self-identification because, for him, “to be in the world means to have an identity, and from this identity, to transcend, that is, to expand, to be meaningful, to be unique first, and then to be recognized as an equal” (2000, 159).

In addition to the inferiority-complex and lack-of-international-presence discourses, this book addresses the musical identity dilemma of a national population that tends to prefer music genres of foreign origin and that is not celebrated for having created distinctive musical styles of international or even broad national popularity. However, not every country is a musical powerhouse like Cuba, which has produced music crazes with the rumba, the *habanera*, the *son*, the mambo, and the *cha cha cha*, to name just a few; or like Mexico and Brazil, whose popular music forms and artists are internationally known. It is important to note that there are countries whose populations may be as musically active as any other, but who devote their energies almost entirely to “imported” musical styles (for example, rock, salsa, Western classical music). As Peter Manuel points out in examining the impact of urbanization and rural-to-urban migration on popular music, although “popular music may sound to the naïve ear as a crude imitation of other forms, [it] may serve as a metaphor for the creation of a distinctive world of common meanings and shared cultural ideologies” (1988, 17). Thus, musics that may look like a simple carbon copy to cultural outsiders may be meaningful to insiders for reasons that can only be understood by examining the history and sociocultural setting of that country.

One example is the Orquesta de la Luz, a Japanese salsa band of the mid-1980s and 1990s, which impressed the world with its impeccable performances of salsa. Hosokawa (2002) argues that the Orquesta de la Luz should not be seen as Japanese musicians giving in to cultural imperialism, but rather as representing modernity and westernization in Japan. According to Hosokawa, Japanese people tend to disdain their own musical roots because they are reminiscent of the harsh policy of isolation under which they lived for more than two centuries before the Meiji period.⁹ This historical background helps us understand why Japanese people show a preference for Western music and invest their musical energies in reproducing it (2002, 303).

Salsa in Cali, Colombia, exemplifies another “imported” music that has been adopted and resignified as local, to such a degree that Caleños (people from Cali) claim their city to be the “world capital of salsa” (Waxer 2002). Although Caleños recognize salsa’s roots and further development in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and New York, they view salsa as a cultural form that helps them “formulate an alternative cosmopolitan identity as they became increasingly tied to world markets, while being excluded from national and elite spheres

of cosmopolitan culture” (2002, 2). Salsa in Cali is, therefore, an expression of modernity, transnational markets, and cosmopolitan values, rather than an expression of life in the barrio, as originally intended by Nuyorican¹⁰ musicians in the 1960s and 1970s.

Over time, Ecuadorians have adopted and adapted foreign music forms to their national repertoire. This book shows how upper-middle- and lower-class Ecuadorians have responded to the adoption of the Colombian *pasillo*, which acquired the status of a national musical symbol in the first half of the twentieth century, and the Peruvian *tecnocumbia*, which is scorned by elite intellectuals for its lack of originality, despite its association with the Ecuadorian nation among the lower classes. Both popular musics reveal new sensibilities and a new sense of modernity emerging in periods of profound social, economic, and political transformations. The *pasillo* developed in the aftermath of the Liberal Revolution at the turn of the twentieth century, when the new bourgeoisie was seeking for symbols of the new social and political order. The *tecnocumbia* appeared as a result of the international exodus produced by the economic crisis of the late 1990s in Ecuador. In both types of music, it is the lyrical content and the emotional performances of Ecuadorian singers that are seen as embodying the feelings of the nation and that ultimately make these songs Ecuadorian music. As the examples of Japan, Cali, and Ecuador illustrate, different reasons motivate different people to devote their artistic impulses to adopting or reproducing styles of music of foreign origin; however, for local people, these songs acquire meanings other than those that inspired them.

A Theoretical Framework

This study is framed by Anderson’s well-known conceptualization of the nation as an “imagined community” (1991). Several reasons explain this approach. Identities are first imagined, and only then articulated, performed, narrated, materialized, negotiated, and/or contested. Due to its private and subjective character, the work of imagining is the starting point for the formation of ideological discourses and social practices that enable people from different ethnic, racial, class, and generational backgrounds to articulate a sense of national belonging. The notion of “imagined community” also allows us to explore the coexistence of alternate visions of the nation and analyze simultaneous formations of local, regional, national, transnational, and postnational communities interacting with each other. Most importantly, the concept of “imagined community” allows us to explore the agency of the popular classes because, although the elites may be able to symbolically impose their cultural canon on the popular classes, they have no control over the production of meanings.

This study integrates “a discourse-centered approach” (Sherzer 1987; Urban 1991) into the study of popular music and national identity. For Urban, the analysis of culture begins with an examination of concrete discourses because “culture is localized in concrete, publicly accessible signs, the most important of which are actually occurring instances of discourses” (1991, 1). By discourse I mean not only the way people talk about music, but also the ways in which musical sounds mediate social reality. Discourse is considered here to be “the locus of the expression of ideology and especially of the playing out and the working out of conflicts, tensions, and changes inherent in ideological systems” (Sherzer 1990, 7). Following this line of thought, I view identities not only as “trapped in public discourse” (Urban 1991), but also as manifest in musical performances and in the acts of listening, discussing, thinking, and writing about music (Stokes 1994).

By examining the notion of elite and working-class *música nacional*, I seek to understand how upper-middle-class Ecuadorians discursively construct and maintain class hierarchies with the indigenous and lower-class mestizo populations, and how the latter express their sense of Ecuadorianness in their own cultural terms. To this end, I examine a series of upper-middle-class discourses and lower-class practices that express pride and shame for the national and popular culture. Upper-middle-class discourses include: “Ecuadorians do not have a national identity because its popular music is little known internationally”; “Ecuadorians hold their national culture in low esteem and prefer to listen to foreign music”; “Ecuadorian music is sad and makes people cry and drink”; and “Ecuadorian singers are ‘karaoke singers’ because they show little originality and professionalism in their performances.”

Studies on musical nationalism tend to focus on elite constructions of an “official” national identity, which generally examines the role of the government and the media in elevating a local or regional music to national status. While I use this approach to examine the elite *música nacional*, I also explore how the popular classes actively express and assert their sense of national belonging through everyday musical practices that mindlessly recall and materialize the nation. My study of Ecuadorian national identity is greatly informed by the works of Robert Foster (2002) and Michael Billig (1995), who look at consumerism, everyday discourses, and banal activities as locus of “daily nationalism.” For them, an identity is to be found in the embodied habits of social life and routine activities of everyday life, such as ways of thinking and talking about nationhood, eating typical food, and listening and dancing to national popular musics. These forms of daily nationalism are often overlooked because the continual reminders of nationhood are familiar and slip from attention, unlike official nationalisms, which exhibit passionate demonstrations of patriotism in a public setting, such as singing a national anthem at the Olympics (Billig 1995).

Music labels are usually thought of as strategies used by the recording industries to market a new style of music, for example, salsa, *música tropical*, or world music; however, labels are also used as “othering” tools. In his examination of the landing of Columbus in the Americas, Trouillot argues that “names set up a field of power” that shape our way of looking at things, and he challenges us to examine what kind of power is at work in our naming practices (1995, 115). He notes that the way in which an event is described or remembered to have happened—such as whether Columbus’s arrival in the Americas was a “discovery,” an “encounter,” or an “invasion”—will greatly influence our way of looking at it. Similarly, the labels Ecuadorians use to refer to various styles of mestizo popular music influence the way they view the people who produce and listen to them. In Ecuador, songs labeled *chichera* by the elites are associated with “Indianness,” *cholos*, *longos*, and drunkenness, while *música nacional* is associated with educated, “decent,” and sensitive upper-middle-class people.

In the Field

This book analyzes four styles of EPM that emerged and developed in Guayaquil and Quito in different periods of the twentieth century—elite *música nacional*, *rocolera*, *chichera*, and *tecnocumbia*. The study of elite *música nacional* necessarily involves an examination of the origin and development of a well-known song repertoire that encompasses an array of Ecuadorian musical genres. My ethnographic work is centered on Quito, the place where *rocolera*, *chichera*, and *tecnocumbia* acquired national overtones and where the ethnic, racial, and class conflicts I discuss in this book are more conspicuous.¹¹ It is also in Quito where the *tecnocumbia* boom had its greatest impact and where large EPM concerts and an alternative music industry developed.

I examine Guayaquil as the arena where the nationalization of the *pasillo* (1920s–50s), the emergence of *rocolera* music (1970s), and the “tropicalization” of *música nacional* (1960s–70s) started, as well as the headquarters of the two largest record companies that promoted these musical styles at the national level. The music scene in Guayaquil has been more Caribbean-oriented and open to international music trends than the scene in Quito, which is more traditionalist and Andes-focused. The singers and types of repertoire that are popular in each city are markedly different and also have different connotations. For these reasons, the analysis of *mestizaje* and EPM in Guayaquil requires a separate study and awaits further research.

I conducted multisited fieldwork for this book from November 2001 through October 2004, though many observations I present in this study are the result of my exposure to elite *música nacional* since childhood, and also

during my sojourn in Quito in the early 1990s as a music researcher of several cultural institutions. In addition to Guayaquil and Quito, I traveled to Madrid and New York in the spring of 2003 to explore how Ecuadorian migrants recreate aspects of their national culture abroad and to see how their perceptions of *música nacional* have changed in the diaspora. Finally, I spent two weeks in Lima to get acquainted with the social venues and the development of the *tecnocumbia* in Peru. I was interested in comparing the similarities and differences between the performance practices and meanings that this music generates in Ecuador and Peru.

I conducted archival research and examined music scores and songbooks, and listened to recordings of early twentieth-century *pasillos* and *sanjuanitos*.¹² Likewise, I interviewed numerous Ecuadorian composers, singers, disc jockeys, record producers, music-store owners, and music entrepreneurs in Quito, Guayaquil, New York, and Madrid, as well as people of different socioeconomic levels selected at random on the streets and in buses, parks, music stores, and concerts. I devoted most of my spare time in Quito to listening to EPM programs on the radio and to watching EPM videos on television. Buses and the trolley transport system became important sites of fieldwork as they provided a space for informal conversations with passengers and opportunities to see their reactions to the different types of musics listened to while using these means of transportation. I also attended numerous elite and working-class *música nacional* concerts at various locations in Quito. As a participant-observer, I engaged in the dancing and sharing of drinks that normally take place at these events.

In order to provide a flavor of how Ecuadorians of different walks of life articulate identity, race, and gender issues, I present numerous YouTube comments posted on the Internet. Some are witty and clever, others are racist, and some silly and obscene, but they are also informative, expressive, and revealing in different ways. Although the commentators' backgrounds are unknown and their opinions may represent only a section of Ecuadorians who are literate and have access to computers, their comments help readers understand in vivid ways the issues of race, ethnicity, and identity that I address in this study.

My exposure to the elite *música nacional* repertoire as a woman who was born and raised in Guayaquil allowed me to navigate and recognize the differences between the various styles of EPM. It would have been a more difficult task for me to notice the musical nuances of elite and working-class *música nacional* had I not had this background. Although Quito was a familiar site to me because I had lived there between 1991 and 1995, the EPM concert venues and the people who attended the EPM concerts were not. At that time, I was well acquainted with the repertoires of elite *música nacional* and Ecuadorian art music because of my upbringing and previous research work

in Quito. I had also heard *rocolera* music on the radio but was not acquainted with the music and the social contexts of *chichera* music and *tecnocumbia*.

As with all popular musics, a major challenge in this research has been finding reliable data to reconstruct the origin and development of the different styles of music analyzed in this book. Most national record companies went into bankruptcy in the 1980s or early 1990s due to music piracy and the onset of the economic crisis; their music catalogs and sales records have been lost. Nonetheless, I have been able to sketch a rough history and periodization of elite *música nacional*, *rocolera*, and *chichera* music with the help of records, music scores, and articles penned by journalists and music enthusiasts that appeared in newspapers and music magazines. I have also relied on oral histories provided by renowned musicians and singers of the 1970s. While this source of information provides useful personal insights, it also requires careful treatment because composers are passionate and often highly subjective in their opinions about their music. Many times the singers I interviewed treated me as if I were a radio journalist and spoke to me as if they were addressing a radio audience.

This book fills a lacuna in the study of Latin American popular music. Aside from an article on the Ecuadorian *pasillo* by the American musicologist Johannes Riedel (1986), little has been published in English on Ecuador's urban popular music. Most investigations by native and foreign scholars focus on indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian musics, rituals, and dances (Moreno 1996; Whitten 1974; Coba 1985; Botero 1991; Schechter 1992, 1994; Volinsky 2001; Franco 1999, 2000, 2002; Meisch 2002; Ritter 2003; Wibbelsman 2009). Students of the Ecuadorian *pasillo* have been more interested in seeking the origin and history of this musical genre than in examining its significance as a social expression (Riedel 1986; Godoy 1995; Guerrero Gutiérrez 1996; Granda 2004; Guerrero and Mullo 2005). Only in the late 1990s have scholars begun to examine EPM as a social expression reflecting the concerns and experiences of the urban popular classes (Núñez 1998; Quintana n.d.; Ibarra 1998; Moscoso 1999; Santillán 2001; Santillán and Ramírez 2002; De la Torre 2003). This lack of attention is partly due to the identification of EPM with commercialization and mass mediation, which some Ecuadorian scholars consider unworthy of study. The association with bohemian lifestyles and the lack of formal music training of EPM musicians has also contributed to its value being diminished in academic circles.

A Note on the Terms Used in the Book

A few terms in this study need clarification. I employ the phrase Ecuadorian popular music (EPM) as an umbrella term referring to a group of Ecuadorian

musical genres and styles (*rocolera*, *chichera*, and *tecnocumbia*) associated with the popular classes. In my view, EPM more effectively describes the uses, functions, and contexts of this repertoire, as well as the people who produce and consume it, without the negative connotations embedded in the terms *rocolera* (drunkenness), *chichera* (“Indianness”), and *tecnocumbia* (lower-class aesthetics). This term also distinguishes working-class musics, such as those mentioned above, from the elite *música nacional*. The word “popular” in EPM refers to the Latin American notion of *música del pueblo* (people’s music), which is disseminated both in rural and urban areas through grassroots and pirated recordings and promoted by an alternative mass media targeting lower-class audiences. This notion of “popular” contrasts with that of British and North American cultural studies, which imply a highly commodified and mass-mediated music.

The reader will notice that throughout this book I refer to several musical genres, particularly the *pasillo* and the *sanjuanito*, using a variety of labels. For example, when I discuss the elite *pasillo*, I am referring to the musical symbol of the nation and call it *pasillo nacional*; when I discuss the *pasillo rocolero*, I am referring to the working-class *pasillo* composed in the 1970s. Likewise, when I analyze the *sanjuanito*, I may be referring to an indigenous, mestizo, urban, folkloric, or national *sanjuanito*. I apply the term “*chichera* music” to refer to the modern *sanjuanito* played with electric guitars and synthesizers, while the *sanjuanito nacional* is the stylized rendition of the mestizo *sanjuanito*, which has musical arrangements similar to those of the elite *música nacional*. Following the Ecuadorian naming practice, I use the term *chichera* to point to the modernization of the Ecuadorian *sanjuanito*, instead of “*chicha*,” which refers to similar processes of migration and urban growth that occurred in Peru with the *huayno*. I also spell *tecnocumbia* without an “h” following the Ecuadorian convention, rather than *technocumbia*, which is how Peruvian scholars write this term.

In Latin America, the lower classes are not at all homogeneous, as Pacini-Hernández rightly points out in her study of Dominican *bachata* (1995, 238). I use the term “popular classes” as an umbrella term to refer to people with low-income levels, whether they are employed, underemployed, or earn their living as informal vendors. This term is a literal translation from the Spanish, which I am deliberately employing to capture the Spanish connotation even though, strictly speaking, it does not carry the same meaning in English. The term “popular classes” is inclusive of indigenous, lower-class mestizo, and Afro-Ecuadorian people who live either in rural areas or in the cities. It also encompasses people with various educational levels whose cultural inclinations lean toward the social taste of the lower classes, for example, teachers and professionals who work in the public sector and earn low salaries. Because

of this inclusive usage, I often use the term “popular classes” interchangeably with “working classes,” “lower classes,” or “mestizos.” Since the early 2000s, the term “Ecuadorian migrants” has acquired a similar connotation because most people who emigrated in the 2000s come from the underclasses. Therefore, when I write “Ecuadorian migrants,” I am referring to lower-middle-class mestizos who have emigrated and live in a host country. By contrast, I use the term “upper-middle classes” to refer to people who are better-off, including not only the wealthy upper classes but also middle-class Ecuadorians who identify with the elites’ aesthetics (white-mestizos).

One goal of this book is to present a macro picture of what *música nacional* is (or should be) for different social groups. This task reminds me of the anecdote of a group of blind men who visit an elephant in its cage and compare their impressions of the animal according to the parts of the body they were able to feel (Seegers 1992, 107). The man that felt the trunk thought the elephant was long and flexible, the one who felt the tail thought it was small, while the one standing under the belly felt the animal was huge and heavy. Each man had a different impression according to his personal experience and thought that he had an accurate idea of the elephant. In a similar vein, Ecuadorians from different generations, ethnicities, and social classes have different personal experiences with the elite and working-class *música nacional*, and they will agree or disagree with some of the issues I describe in this book. To a certain degree, my duty in this book has been to describe as many parts of the elephant’s body as possible so that the reader will have a better idea of the animal. Every social group in Ecuador has its own conceptualization of what *música nacional* is and usually rejects alternative views with which it is not familiar. This is especially true of upper-middle-class Ecuadorians who are not acquainted with the *rocolera*, *chichera*, and *tecnocumbia* social venues and the meaning these musics convey to their listeners. They will reject the idea that these styles of music may even be considered *música nacional*. Nonetheless, my role as an ethnomusicologist studying the social meaning of a country’s national music is to present as many angles of its cultural significance to different social groups.

A Glance in the Mirror

Any cultural study of music bears the mark of the ethnographer’s strengths and biases. Despite the fact that I was a “native” scholar doing research in my home country, I frequently felt like an outsider during my fieldwork. Born and raised in Guayaquil, I was a middle-class woman of Chinese descent conducting research in Quito on various styles of music associated with a stigmatized indigenous and working-class population. My coastal accent

often revealed me as a *mona* (a “monkey”), a pejorative term used by *serranos* (highlanders) to refer to *costeño* (coastal) people. In addition, many people I spoke to on buses or at EPM concerts in Quito thought I was a foreigner. They often asked me if I was from China, Korea, or Japan. I was surprised by these questions because in Guayaquil, where there is a large Chinese population, nobody would have asked such a question. Their inquiries reminded me that I look Chinese on the outside, something I tend to forget because I generally perceive myself as Ecuadorian. Having lived in the former Soviet Union and the United States for many years as a graduate student, I was constantly reminded of my Ecuadorian nationality when I was treated as an *inastránka studentka* (a “foreign student”) in the former country and as an “international student” in the latter.

Knowing that I had studied musicology at the Chaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow, many acquaintances from the National Symphony Orchestra in Quito asked me why I had shifted my research interests from the “great masters” of Western European music to the music of Julio Jaramillo and Aladino, *rocolera* singers associated with drunkenness and the cantina (lower-class bar) environment. They first thought I was doing research on the cantinas located on 24 de Mayo Street, a red-zone neighborhood in Quito’s historic center. While I did visit a few to get acquainted with that environment, I was aware that the answers to my research questions about the stigma placed on *rocolera* music would not be found there. Some upper-middle-class Ecuadorians I spoke to had never heard the word *rocolera* before and thought that I was studying Ecuadorian rock music. My friends in Quito often warned me about violence at *rocolera* concerts and recommended that I sit up in the highest rows of the arena to avoid being hit by beer bottles. Whether the throwing of bottles was common in the past, I never encountered it at any of the many concerts I attended. It is obvious that there is a virulent stigma attached to this music and to the people who listen to it by the upper-middle classes.

My interest in *música nacional* and *rocolera* music stems from a long-standing curiosity about the discourses and taboos constructed around them. Just like the upper-middle classes I examine in this book, I grew up listening to passionate discourses and debates concerning the rise and decline of the *pasillo* as a symbol of national identity. When I began conducting this research, I wanted to know why the *pasillo* causes such strong reactions among advocates and detractors, and what issues were at stake in those debates.

Organization

This book examines several themes that have influenced, and continue to influence, Ecuadorians’ views of themselves and their national identity. These

include the impact of rural-to-urban and international migrations, the effect of globalization on the local music scene, the loss of the elites' sociocultural hegemony in the late twentieth century, and the agency of the popular classes in shaping their own social imaginary of the Ecuadorian nation. The book is organized chronologically according to the emergence of the different styles of Ecuadorian music discussed in this study. Chapter 1 provides an overview of Ecuador's history and explains the origin of various discourses pertaining to the lack of an Ecuadorian national identity, Ecuadorians' low esteem for their national culture, and their pride in Ecuadorian sentimentality. It also introduces Manuel Espinosa's idiosyncratic view of *mestizaje*, which provides insights into the national identity question and Ecuadorians' denial of their indigenous heritage.

Chapter 2 introduces an array of *música nacional* genres discussed throughout the book and familiarizes the reader with the group of authors, composers, and performers who have shaped the sounds and images of elite *música nacional*. Chapter 3 focuses on the role of the Liberal Revolution and the mass media in the nationalization of the *pasillo* in the 1920s and 1930s as well as the role of rural-to-urban migrations and the processes of urbanization and modernization in the elite *pasillo*'s decline in the 1970s. Chapters 4 and 5 examine *rocolera* and *chichera* music as expressions of lower-class mestizos (that is, *cholos* and *longos*) in the urban areas in the 1970s. The first is associated with the emergence of a working-class music reflecting the life experiences and sentiments of the new urban classes; the latter examines the modernization of indigenous music.

Chapter 6 explores the *tecnocumbia* boom in Ecuador in the late 1990s and the creation of an alternative music industry that became the outlet for EPM on a national and international level. Chapter 7 examines the cultural practices of Ecuadorian migrants in Madrid and how they "recall" and "materialize" Ecuador in Madrid, thus reinforcing their national identity in the diaspora. In the Epilogue, I examine how the elite *música nacional* epitomizes the ideology of *mestizaje* as *blanqueamiento* and how the working-class *música nacional* may be seen as a better reflection of the multicultural nation proclaimed in Ecuador's 1998 Constitution.

All translations of interviews, song lyrics, and citations of Ecuadorian scholars and writers are my own; some have been edited to make them clearer to an English-speaking audience. The images are either my own photographs or are taken from CD and LP jackets. The listening examples illustrating the elite and working-class *música nacional* in this book are part of a musical canon and can be listened to on the radio, CDs, and YouTube videos.