

notwithstanding). With the collection winning the Grammy Award for Best Orchestral Performance in March 2021, Dudamel and the Los Angeles Philharmonic's recordings bring even greater exposure to this music. This set is highly recommended, and for my money, may become the new standard collection of these rewarding symphonies that speak to our time.

David Thurmaier is associate professor of music theory and chair of the Music Studies Division at the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory. His writings about Charles Ives appear in various journals, and he currently serves as the vice president of the Charles Ives Society.

Los Rurales Y Los Amigos de Buena Vista. *Ocotitia*. Released February 26, 2021. Cugate Clásicos Latinos, LC 08867, 2021. CD.

Katia Lanuza

Independent Scholar, Arlington, TX, USA
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The Mexican brass band, Los Rurales, consists of six members: Omar Cruz Ojeda (trumpet), Juan Manuel Lagunes Vásquez (trumpet), Francisco Jiménez Martínez (French horn), Edgardo Jiménez Orozco (trombone), Edgar Rubio Arias (tuba), and Eduardo César Hernández Vega (percussion). After initially meeting at the University of Veracruz, the members of Los Rurales came together to form a brass quintet and quickly advanced from playing gigs locally to appearing at larger regional venues such as *Around the World on 80 Bicycles*, *Otras Músicas de Oaxaca*, and *El Festival Señor de Chalca*. As the name of the band suggests, Los Rurales (“those from the countryside”) specializes in repertoire emphasizing rural cultural roots. They combine Oaxacan music with Eastern European Balkan brass techniques in a distinctive and lively way, occasionally performing in more popular styles such as rock’n’roll and jazz.

Los Rurales joined trumpeter Roberto Garcia (tracks 2, 8, and 9) and trombonist Jesús Aguaje Ramos (tracks 8 and 9) from the Buenavista Social Club, a Cuban ensemble, to collaborate on *Ocotitia*.¹ The album showcases thirteen energetic combinations of Oaxacan and Balkan folk music, from the fandango, a lively couple’s dance originating from Spain, to the Cocek, a popular genre of Balkan bass.² The band’s instrumentation allows for a well-balanced ensemble, with the trumpets on melody, the bass as the rhythmic motor, and the French horn, trombone(s), tuba, and percussion all acting as the inner voices. Multiple tracks begin with a slow, stately introduction that segues into a more lively section, while all tracks feature virtuosic solos or soli sections. These soli, which typically occur toward the middle of the tracks, consist of groupings of lower brass or, more commonly, virtuosic trumpet solos layered over a syncopated ostinato.

The first track, “Ceñidor Cocek,” not only exemplifies the aforementioned musical characteristics, but also the transcultural nature of this album. “Ceñidor Cocek” begins with a 30-second introduction that leads into a lively Mexican folk melody played by the trumpets. The melody is supported by the Balkan brass and percussion. The piece then transitions to a climax, which showcases a virtuosic trumpet solo. “Fandango,” another notable track, features a lively Mexican-styled fandango that utilizes predictable major harmonies and a lively brass section while also incorporating Oaxacan cultural imagery in the accompanying music video. The video emphasizes Oaxacan cultural traditions including customary Oaxacan clothing, local festivities, Catholic imagery, and a couple performing the

¹Rafael Lam, “Buscando la Sociedad Buena Vista Social Club,” *Gramma*, July 3, 2015, <http://www.gramma.cu/cultura/2015-07-03/buscando-la-sociedad-buena-vista-social-club> (accessed August 5, 2021).

²Israel J. Katz, “Fandango,” Grove Music Online (accessed August 4, 2021). Jan Laurens Hartong, *Musical Terms Worldwide: A Companion for the Musical Explorer* (Rome: Semar, 2006), 100.

fandango.³ In contrast to this celebration of Mexican and Oaxacan culture, “Hope” relies on harmonies and rhythms reminiscent of New York style jazz.

Ocotitia also features two covers: “La Bamba” (Ritchie Valens, 1958) and “What a Wonderful World” (Louis Armstrong, 1967), with a bonus remix of “What a Wonderful World” by Steve Last. The lively cover of “La Bamba” closely imitates the 1958 version, with the addition of various solo passages for trumpet. “What a Wonderful World,” on the other hand, is transformed through the incorporation of Balkan brass elements such as the syncopated percussion and accompaniment, as well as chromatic harmonies and a minor mode.

In the album’s bonus remix, Steve Last adds electronic elements, hand clapping, vocals, and the heavier elements of Balkan brass for an exciting twist on the well-known song. In the end, *Ocotitia* blends influences from Oaxaca, Eastern Europe, and the United States to create refreshing works that are only elevated through the excellent performances of the musicians.

Through this album, Los Rurales and the Buenavista Social Club Oaxaca continue to expand and diversify what has historically been considered “American music.” Traditional music from Latin American countries remains frequently overlooked, while marginalized groups and cultures (e.g., the Oaxacan people and culture) are particularly underrepresented. *Ocotitia* showcases Oaxacan culture while also highlighting elements of transnationalism through the inclusion of Louis Armstrong’s “What a Wonderful World” and Ritchie Valens’s “La Bamba”—popular hits from the United States. African American jazz and Mexican American rock’n’roll is juxtaposed with traditional Oaxacan music and Balkan brass, expanding (and perhaps challenging) the listener’s perceptions. *Ocotitia* provides a thought-provoking sound world that encourages its audience to engage in conversations about marginalized musical communities, intersectionality, and transcultural musics.

Katia Lanuza is a local of Arlington, Texas. She graduated in 2021 with Master’s in Musicology from Texas Christian University. Ms. Lanuza’s research focuses on Mexican American protest music. Her additional areas of interest include Latin American music and race studies.

³Los Rurales Y Los Amigos de Buena Vista, “Fandango,” YouTube, July 12, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tFxoAPBup9k>.