



# Music, Race, and Nation: Musica Tropical in Colombia (Chicago Studies in Ethnomusicology)

*Peter Wade*

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Long a favorite on dance floors in Latin America, the *porro*, *cumbia*, and *vallenato* styles that make up Colombia's *música tropical* are now enjoying international success. How did this music—which has its roots in a black, marginal region of the country—manage, from the 1940s onward, to become so popular in a nation that had prided itself on its white heritage? Peter Wade explores the history of *música tropical*, analyzing its rise in the context of the development of the broadcast media, rapid urbanization, and regional struggles for power. Using archival sources and oral histories, Wade shows how big band renditions of *cumbia* and *porro* in the 1940s and 1950s suggested both old traditions and new liberties, especially for women, speaking to a deeply rooted image of black music as sensuous. Recently, nostalgic, "whitened" versions of *música tropical* have gained popularity as part of government-sponsored multiculturalism.

Wade's fresh look at the way music transforms and is transformed by ideologies of race, nation, sexuality, tradition, and modernity is the first book-length study of Colombian popular music.

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