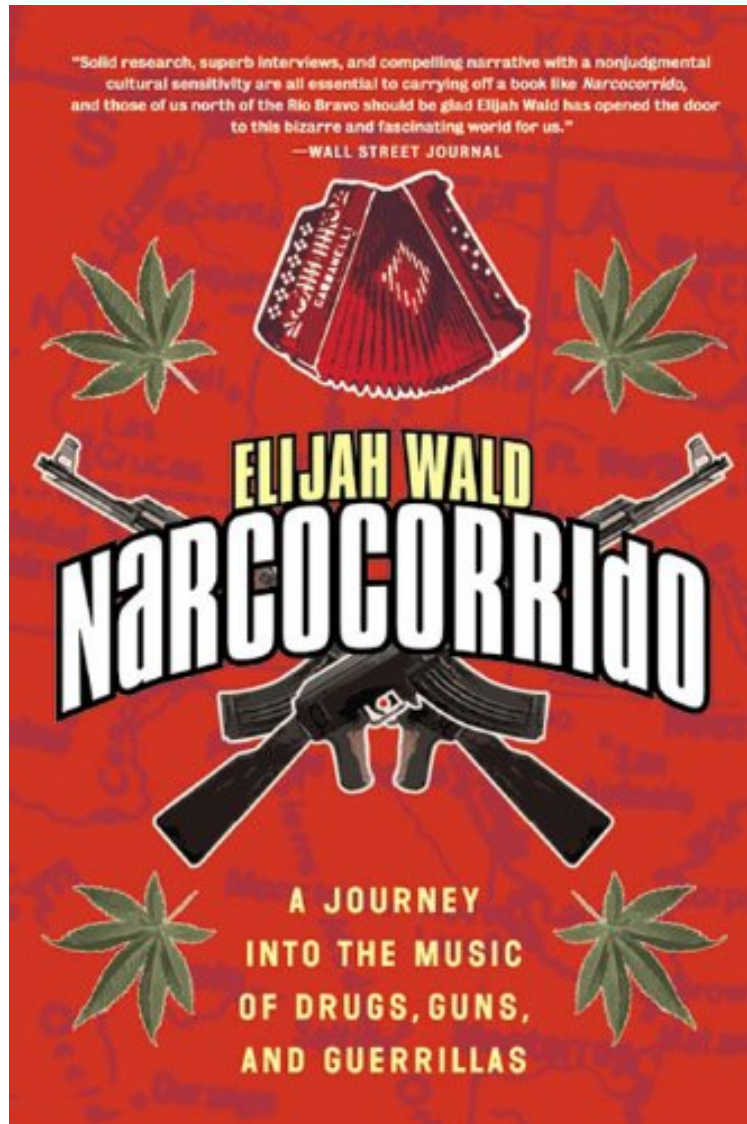


(Free) Narcocorrido: A Journey into the Music of Drugs, Guns, and Guerrillas

Narcocorrido: A Journey into the Music of Drugs, Guns, and Guerrillas

Elijah Wald

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Elijah Wald : Narcocorrido: A Journey into the Music of Drugs, Guns, and Guerrillas before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Narcocorrido: A Journey into the Music of Drugs, Guns, and Guerrillas:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Trafficker BalladsBy SoapsudsEven though has it in its headline as the "(Spanish Version)," the book is in English. Nonetheless, explore the book by clicking "Look Inside" and make double sure it is in English.Author Elijah Wald takes the reader to the deepest parts of Mexico and South America in

"A journey into the music of drugs, guns, and guerrillas. In gathering research for his book titled "Narcocorrido," (Drug traffickers' ballads) the author places his life on the line. He could have been mistaken for a DEA agent and killed. However, Elijah Wald "is a writer and musician with twenty years' experience covering roots and world music. He was writer and consultant on the Smithsonian multimedia project 'The Mississippi: River of song' and is the author of the award-winning biography 'Josh White: Society Blues.'" In his book, "Narcocorrido" the author takes the reader with him in an unforgettable journey to the interviews he made of composers and singers of famous, sometimes political and dangerous narco corridors and their composers and singers. He interviews such composers as Angel Gonzalez, "The Father Camelia," Paulino Vargas, "El Maestro," Teodoro Bello, Mario Quintero, Francisco Quintero, The Rivera Family, Enrique Franco, Jesse Amenta, Juan Garza and many others. The author goes in search of the roots, history, and the reasons some narco corridor singers are savagely murdered. He takes the reader in a dangerous tour to many towns and cities in Mexico and South America. He gambles his life and takes the reader from Tijuana, Baja California to as far as Chiapas, South America. Thus, author, Elijah Wald, "...shows how popular music can remain the voice of a people, even in this modern world of globalization, electronic media, and gangsters who ship cocaine in 747s." The experience the reader gets from reading "Narcocorrido," is one that he or she will never forget.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Decent book
By XpressNightly
I got interested in this book after looking at some NarcoCorrido album covers my friend owns and wondered what was the obsession with AR-15's and wearing bullet belts crossed around the chest. It's a decent book written from a "Gringo's" perspective. While it's a good read and very informative, I found that a lot of the interviews he did with musicians, many were very tight-lipped and offered very vague answers or simply gave the author the run-around, and this occurs over and over again throughout the book. I understand that these musicians probably fear for their lives and don't want to anger the hand that feeds them, or maybe they simply don't trust a foreigner prying into their lives, but it doesn't lend to good storytelling when every interview is a series of ambiguous dialogue.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.
Great read
By Jason A. Burchaski
While traveling Tucson I fell in love with the Narco Ballads. You really don't find this type of music where I am in the Midwest. I was interested in the story behind the music and this book really takes you on a journey into the world of the Narcocorrido. It is an amusing and intelligent read.

In the first full-length exploration of the contemporary and controversial Mexican corrido, award-winning author Elijah Wald blends a travel narrative with his search for the roots of this genre -- a modern outlaw music that fuses the sensibilities of medieval ballads with the edgy grit of gangsta rap. From international superstars to rural singers documenting their local current events in the regions dominated by guerilla war, Wald visited these songwriters in their homes, exploring the heartland of the Mexican drug traffic and traveling to urban centers such as Los Angeles and Mexico City. The corrido genre is famous for its hard-bitten songs of drug traffickers and gunfights, and also functions as a sort of musical newspaper, singing of government corruption, the lives of immigrants in the United States, and the battles of the Zapatista rebellion in Chiapas. Though largely unknown to English speakers, corridos top the Latin charts and dominate radio playlists both in the United States and points south. Wald provides in-depth looks at the songwriters who have transformed groups like the popular Tigres del Norte into enduring superstars, as well as the younger artists who are carrying the corrido into the twenty-first century. In searching for the poetry and social protest behind the gaudy lyrics of powerful drug lords, Wald shows how popular music can remain the voice of a people, even in this modern world of globalization, electronic media, and gangsters who ship cocaine in 747s.

From Publishers Weekly
Guitar in hand, journalist and musician Wald (Josh White: Society Blues) takes a yearlong journey through Mexico and the southwestern U.S. tracking down composers and performers of the narcocorrido, a modern spinoff of the 19th-century Mexican folk ballad (corrido) that combines the traditional accompaniment of accordion and 12-string guitar (bajo sexto) with markedly current lyrics. Gone are the old "song stories" celebrating heroic generals and lost battles of the Mexican revolution. Narcocorridos romanticize the drug trade the botched smugglings, fallen kingpins and dishonorable police. Wald interviews dozens of key players, from Angel Gonzalez, whose 1972 "Contrabando y Traiciin" ("Smuggling and Betrayal") is credited with launching the narco-trend, to the Rivera family, whose popular Los Angeles record label releases "songs that are notable for their lack of social consciousness, their willingness to push the limits of acceptability and baldly cash in on the most violent and nasty aspects of the drug trade." The style has become hugely popular in L.A. and northwestern Mexico and has spawned a narcoculture marked by cowboy hats, sports suits and gold chains. Unfortunately, Wald's narrow, first-person account reads like a travel journal, blithely moving from subject to subject, ignoring historical context. He glosses over the U.S. and Mexican governments' antidrug military campaigns, which disrupted the lives of many innocent civilians. Wald may think the history of U.S.-Mexican drug trafficking has been sufficiently recounted elsewhere, but explaining the narcocorrido without this background is like writing a history of the American protest song without discussing Vietnam. Bw photos not seen by PW. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.
From Library Journal
Wald (Josh White: Society Blues) hitchhiked across Mexico in search of the modern corrido, a popular musical genre that reports the heroics of its subjects against the backdrop of norteño-like harmonies in guitar and accordion. His book

focuses especially on the narcocorrido, a genre of ballad that glorifies gun-toting drug lords in a Mexican version of gangsta rap with accordions. In this personalized account, the author interviews corrido songwriters Angel Gonzalez and Paulino Vargas, who scored hits with Los Tigres del Norte, the most popular group of the genre. He takes his readers to Culiacan, the heart of the Mexican drug business, where archetypal corridista Chalino Sanchez immortalized drug traffickers and their exploits before his own assassination. Wald moves next to Los Angeles, where the Chalino-influenced Riveras reign as the first family of the narcocorrido. In the last part of the book, he locates the more politically minded corridistas Enrique Franco and Jesse Armenta, travels to the Rio Bravo and the Texas border for Old West-style corridos, and takes a bus to Mexico City and the mountains of southern Mexico, where little-known corridistas sing paeans to Zapatista guerrillas. Wald ends with a visit to Michoacan, the southern Mexican drug capital, where he meets corrido legend Teodoro Bello. Half enthusiast and half ethnomusicologist, Wald offers an engaging, fascinating, and well-written account of a much-neglected musical style that will be irresistible to readers of all types.

Dave Szatmary, Univ. of Washington, Seattle Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist

Narcocorrido is a Mexican fusion of gangsta rap and hard country, a "medieval ballad style whose Robin Hoods . . . fly shipments of cocaine." Its leading purveyors, such as Los Tigres del Norte, are wildly popular with Mexicans and Mexican Americans but almost unknown to mainstream U.S. audiences. Meanwhile, "educated Mexicans [are] horrified by the narcocorridos." Wald traces narcocorrido's development from the Mexican Revolution and Prohibition, when heroic odes (corridos) to revolutionary leaders and tequila smugglers (tequileros) were written. The narcocorridos update that practice to deal with contemporary drug-dealing antiheroes. Wald limns Angel Gonzalez, who "spawned Mexico's most violent and reviled narcocorrido" with his "Contrabando y Traicion" ("Smuggling and Betrayal"); Paulino Vargas, "the most important corrido composer of the modern era"; and others, including larger-than-life legends and tragic heroes aplenty, such as Chalino Sanchez, whose rise to legendary status via demise in a retaliatory gang shooting is "a Mexican version of the Tupac Shakur story." A worthy shelf mate for Michael Eric Dyson's brainy Shakur study, *Holler If You Hear Me* [BKL Ag 01]. Mike Tribby Copyright copy; American Library Association. All rights reserved