

Rubén Molina writes book on Chicano rock bands



*Latinos have always been part of the larger American music mosaic and now a book finally provides documentation. In this interview by **Ramon Hernandez**, **Ruben Molina** details the contributions to rock by Latino musicians.*

By Ramón Hernández

After countless books on California's East L.A. Sound and its artists, a 55-year-old Californian has closed the gap between Chicano's rock predecessors and actual first rock bands dating back to the 1940s, '50s and '60s all the way up until the early '70s giving countless early Texas rock, soul plus rock and roll bands their long due credit and recognition. His name is Rubén Molina.



This is by no means is meant to overlook or be disrespectful to Presidential Scholar Dr. Manuel

Heriberto Jasso Peña, Ph.D, who put la onda chicana and Tejano music on the academic map at virtually every college and university across the United States with “The Texas-Mexican Conjunto, History of a Working Class Music,” “Música Tejana” and “The Mexican American Orquesta.”



While Molina’s “Chicano Soul” includes Tejano music pioneers such as Little Joe, Sunny Ozuna, Freddie Martínez, Augustine Ramírez, Rubén Ramos plus other Tejano artists, it is because of their rock’n’roll, soul and rhythm and blues recordings and that’s the extent of the coverage, that’s Molina’s appropriately and justified cut-off point.

For years, Texas soul and rhythm & blues-rooted artists and groups such as Freddy Fender, the Royal Jesters, Sonny Ace, Trini Lopez, Rene and Rene, Sam the Sham, Paula, Question Mark and the Mysterians plus Rudy and the Reno Bops were completely ignored and omitted in books such as “Barrio Rhythm” and “Land of a Thousand Dances” to name two of the books on early Mexican American rock groups.

Others on that list of Chicano groups who never received their due respect and place in musical history are Randy Garibay, the Dell Kings, the Dell-Tones, the Satin Souls (originally Whitie and the Escorts), Charlie and the Jives, Tito and the Silhouettes, the Broken Hearts, Jimmy Casas, Vince Cantú and the Rockin’ Dominos, Sal and the Centennials, Ricky Dávila and the Laveers, Henry (Peña) and the Kasuals, the Óscar Martínez Orchestra featuring Pepe Cavazos plus so many others, just their names alone could fill an entire book. And that’s exactly what Molina did. He filled the void left by many other musicologists.



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