

Finnegan has plenty to say about local music in *The Hidden Musicians*, as evidenced by the systematic, piece by piece, and lengthy structure of the book. While not everything applies of course, parts of her observations are particularly apt for our work with Puerto Rican music in the Valley.

The early discussion of the distinction between professional and amateur musicians is the first point that hits home. I've never heard the Santiagos call themselves musicians, much less professionals. And yet, very appropriately, they don't describe themselves as amateurs either. Ismael's been playing since he was a young boy (a common trend, it seems) and has played on stage with professional musicians. Adding to the confusion of which moniker to use, the family band Grupo Canela can be hired to play at events. The Santiagos completely confuse any distinction between professional and amateur or non-professional. They make money off their music but only occasionally and have produced an album but play most often at their restaurant as a impromptu mix of whoever is around. They are undoubtedly musicians and professionals (both in the monetary and quality senses), but, at the same time, they are also just a family band simply making music and keeping alive their culture. In the process, the musical members of the Santiago family blur the line in exactly the ways Finnegan discusses in the second introductory chapter.

Victor Rios of Holyoke told us a similar story. Back in his heyday, he made his living playing as a musician in various Puerto Rican bands in and outside of the Valley. Now semi-retired, he no longer plays gigs very often but still plays with his family during holidays and celebrations. He also plays for himself everyday. Its increasingly clear that when playing music is part of your culture, the line between amateur and professional quickly fades into the distance.

Much of the music-making of both Victor Rios and the Santiagos seems to be focused on the process rather than the product. Finnegan focuses "on musical practice rather than musical works" (p. 10) because she wants to get at music's cultural side. This is exactly what music-making itself represents for Victor and the Santiagos. The process of getting together with their friends and family—whether Friday nights at the family restaurant or 'caroling' around the neighborhood during the holidays—is more important than exactly what they're playing. Of course, it only helps that much of what they play is traditional folk music invoking their homeland. For those we've talked to, Puerto Rican music is an established pathway (to use Finnegan's word) to connect back to family, friends, and the island.