

these movements. Consequently, *Black Renaissance Woman* complicates the legacies of American music by illustrating that Black women composers and their work are an integral part of music history.

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## Coleccionistas de Sonido

Website. 2022. <https://www.coleccionistasdesonidos.com/>

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The growing interest in the histories of material culture in the last few decades has given rise to an interesting phenomenon in musical scholarship. Until recently, music binders, known in Latin America as “*álbumes de música*,” were mostly observed solely as containers of music; more specifically, sheet music collected by a private owner. The practice was global from the nineteenth to the early twentieth century, later transferred to other forms of binders and albums of music during the last century. Very few studies looked at the music album itself. Most libraries cataloged the individual pieces rather than the object, without acknowledging the agency behind it. Similarly, most collectors and book sellers separated the sheets from the album to classify or sell them in other ways. However, new research by scholars like Candace Bailey (2021) in the U.S. or Fernanda Vera and Laura Jordan (2022) in Chile has shown how much more there is to say about the albums themselves and their owners.<sup>1</sup>

The website titled *Coleccionistas de Sonido* goes a bit further than that. In a way, it proposes a solution to the conflict of how to present such an object in educational, scholarly, and multimedia terms. It presents a multimedia object from the nineteenth century, reformatted for a twenty-first-century audience, crucially retaining the agency that was so central to those binders 150 years ago. How we go around and inside the binder is our decision. The website focuses on a single, 346-page binder comprising seventy-eight music scores collected between 1848 and 1888 by two members of the Echeverría family in Colombia: Ana and Cristina. The project was led by Juana Monsalve, Daniel Castro Pantoja, Juan Fernando Velásquez, and Rondy Torres, and funded by several Colombian institutions.

The website is structured in an interesting way, resembling a virtual “exhibition” consisting of four rooms that present the material and other resources connected to it, as well as the city of Bogotá and music during that period. The first room focuses on what music binders were, the second on private musical life in the salons of Bogotá, the third on music and women in the private sphere, and finally, the fourth on the mapping of the geographical locations of the music pieces, connecting Bogotá to the wider transatlantic world of the time. There is also a pedagogical “virtual classroom” that explains how to use the website, with an obvious focus on secondary and undergraduate students. All the rooms are filled with videos and music examples prepared specifically for this edition. Throughout the website, the full album can be accessed from a link at the bottom. The site is available in both English and Spanish, which, perhaps nowadays, is unnecessary considering the advances in automatic translation between these two languages. But it is something to highlight in any case, especially for some of the recordings and other materials.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of how the materials are presented is the way the website connects us with the original binder. It displays a variety of different perspectives, ideas, and forms of

<sup>1</sup>Candace Bailey, *Unbinding Gentility: Women Making Music in the Nineteenth-Century South* (University of Illinois Press, 2021); Laura Jordán González and Fernanda Vera Malhue, “Álbumes musicales de mujeres, marcas de uso y escena cultural,” *Latin American Music Review* 43, no. 1 (2022): 27–66.

research in such a way that results are not always explicit: There is an idea of exploration behind the project that is very evident. This is not an academic paper displayed as a website, but rather an organic piece focused on its pedagogical possibilities. For example, room 4 offers two different maps. The first one focuses on music printers, while the second one focuses on the music genres of the scores. This creates two very different maps. The first one is predominantly European, giving a very linear transatlantic relationship between Colombia and European nations. However, the second map creates a much more complex network, which includes several ports in the Caribbean, Africa, and other parts of Europe. While room 1 is very linear, perhaps the closest we get to a traditional academic paper, room 2 is very different. It presents anecdotes, case studies, and problems that help us understand how musical life worked in Bogotá at the time. More than any other room, it goes outside the binder itself, with other sources like newspaper articles from the period and images. These materials, the authors state, reveal “aspects of quotidian life that official music histories kept hidden.” One can only suppose, then, that what the website presents is not “official music history,” but what that official music history is is not made clear. However, it makes for exciting reading for students; an album that lets us enter a private world we had no possibility of accessing before.

But is it the same for scholars? *Coleccionistas de Sonidos* is a very intriguing example of how to showcase an “álbum de música.” These binders, of course, are important pieces of heritage for cities and nations, and thus the website contributes significantly to making one of those sources widely available. However, while going through the different sections of the website, something strikes me. Beyond a few sections (like room 1: the music), I sometimes could completely forget about the historical object that kickstarted the website. There are, of course, some audio recordings, but other recordings are from literary sources. It feels, really, like a website about music binders in general, using one of them as an important example. Perhaps it could be further expanded in the future to include other binders, if there are more in Bogotá, which I imagine there are. At some point, as a scholar, I just want to escape all of it and go back to the original binder and have a look at the materials there, and so I am grateful for having the chance to do so.

*Coleccionistas de Sonido*, then, as the title implies, is more about the social and cultural aspects and the personal agency behind the act of binding music together in this period than about this specific binder itself, which becomes a starting point for the scholars and performers involved. The website serves as a good introduction to the topic, both in English and Spanish, and uses as a case study a very intriguing and transatlantic example of a music binder from a central city in the Americas. Thus, it is certainly a very useful educational resource for undergraduate and secondary students looking at similar materials in local archives and collections and studying nineteenth-century music and/or material cultures of the Americas. Much of what is said can be easily applied to other binders in North and South America, as well as the Caribbean and probably much of Europe. Finally, it provides a rather intriguing solution to the problem of how to present a study of such an object in a way that both contextualizes it but leaves the possibility of accessing it as both music and as a heritage object of national and historical importance.

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