The Eastside: Not Just a Place, but a Spirit

In the early 1960s, the "Eastside Sound" referred to the way Mexican American teenagers in East L.A. performed Latino rhythm and blues. To this day, Chicano and Chicana musicians claim the "Eastside" as an influence as they transform the groove with a global twist.

Almost half of Los Angeles County’s 11 million residents are Latino. In contrast to New York City, though, where Latinos are concentrated in certain neighborhoods, Mexican American communities are dispersed throughout the sprawling Southland region. Even in the 1960s, not all bands making the Eastside sound were from East L.A. Young Mexican Americans were open to incorporating the diverse sounds they heard on the radio as they drove across the expansive boulevards and freeways that connect Mexican American barrios.