

## **ABSTRACT**

Villa Corona, a small town forty minutes southeast of Guadalajara, Mexico, has a music scene so prominent and thriving that it is commonly recognized as the banda epicenter of the Jalisco region. In the mid-1990s, the town's welcome sign was altered to read: "Welcome to Villa Corona, land of Bandas (bands who play the genre banda) and Waterparks" reflecting the success of Banda Machos (The Band of Masculine Men) and Banda Maguey, two of the most well known local bands. The success of those bands encouraged many local musicians and bands to aspire to the same level of international success. La Banda Machos was one of the first bandas to popularize the subgenre techno-banda, adopting the genre's unique mixed instrumentation of wind and electronic instruments, Banda Maguey followed suit soon after. However, even before their success, music already provided an outlet for financial mobility for the people of Villa Corona. The international success of these bandas only solidified music's central role for financial mobility.

This thesis explores the meaning of being a musician, composer, and performer in a small town — with two internationally acclaimed bandas — where over half of the population falls below the poverty line. To do so, I rely on the voices of local musicians — friends and family — and contextualize their experiences through the economic and class dynamics within the music scene and the town's overall service economy. I personally interviewed musicians active in both the current music scene, and the music scene of the 70s – 90s. Additionally, due to the success of local composers, I was able to use the series, "Interviewing Villa Corona Composers," which originally aired on Villa Corona's local channel 21, and is now available on YouTube. Furthermore, I relied on YouTube videos of the yearly fiestas patronales, as these are the cultural highlight of the year, and offer great insight into the town's music scene.