Música De La Raza: Mexican and Chicano Music in Minnesota

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Hosted by Iowa Research Online
this comprehensive guidebook to the more than 700 sculptures documented to date.

The authors have divided the state into six geographic regions and listed each work of public art by the town in which it is located. Maps show the location of each town featured in the inventory. Black-and-white photographs of most of the sculptures are included. Brief narratives on such wide-ranging genres as Civil War monuments, effigy burial mounds, chainsaw art, and grottoes set Wisconsin’s works of public art in a historical context. Rajer and Style provide many related items of interest, including a step-by-step description of the recent restoration of Daniel Chester French’s allegorical sculpture, Wisconsin, created in 1913 for the State Capitol dome in Madison; and the story of Helen Farnsworth Mears, the sculptor state officials removed from the Capitol project so that they could award the commission to French. There are even guidelines for those who are planning to commission a piece of public art.

A guidebook that lovers of history, art, and kitsch might use to plan a weekend tour, Public Sculpture in Wisconsin is also a concise history of the tradition of commemorative sculpture. Many of the genres included in this survey, especially those of burial mounds and grottoes, are especially relevant to the topic of public art in Iowa.


REVIEWED BY BRENDA M. ROMERO, UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO, BOULDER

This CD contains 19 performances, including two religious genres and an impressive range of secular genres, by musicians responsible for establishing a Mexican music culture in Minnesota since the 1920s. The booklet’s vivid historical accounts, enhanced by rare photographs and a section dedicated to defining the genres, reveal the compiler’s intimate connections with the people and their music. She briefly discusses migrant music in rural Minnesota, then takes us to St. Paul’s West Side, historically “the heart of the Mexican community in Minnesota” (23), and beyond. The concluding section includes notes about each recording and its place in “Minnesotano” musical history. Both the research and the recordings (some home or field recorded) are of a high caliber.
This package makes a significant ethnomusicological contribution to those interested in vernacular music of the United States, and specifically in the cultural development of Mexican immigrants in the Midwest, about whom little is widely known. The close proximity of Minnesota and Iowa suggests that Iowans may also gain a better understanding of Mexican and Chicano culture through this compilation. This is particularly important given the steady growth of these ethnic populations in the United States in general.

This is the fifth in a series of ethnic compilations that offer an excellent opportunity to compare and contrast the different vernacular traditions of Minnesota historically and culturally. The Minnesota Historical Society is to be commended for its efforts in producing this valuable series, which serves as a positive model for the rest of the country.