University of Washington

Women Who Rock Oral History Project

Transcript

Martha Gonzalez

Narrator: Martha Gonzalez of Quetzal, The Seattle Fandango Project, and University of Washington Department of Women's Studies

Interviewed by: Carrie Lanza

Date: February 16, 2011

Location: Martha Gonzalez's home, Seattle, WA

Camera and sound: Ashley Parris and Chris Tran

Transcription: Chris Tran, Carrie Lanza, and Ashley Parris

Carrie Lanza (CL): Do you consent to this interview? It's the first question.

Martha Gonzalez (MG): Yes I do.

CL: Could you please introduce yourself?

MG: Sure My name is Martha Gonzalez.

CL: Could you talk about the music groups you represent?

MG: I am a singer, songwriter and …

CL: Before could you say I'm Martha Gonzalez and...that could give a whole sentence.

MG: My name is Martha Gonzalez I am a Singer, Songwriter and Percussionist, primarily from a group from East L.A called Quetzal. I've been with this group for....going on 16 years, but I've also played, been a session player for other groups and I also practice music in the community and as a community organizing tool. And I would like to consider myself as an artivista which is an artist-activist.

CL: Can you describe the musical communities that you are a part of?

MG: Musical communities that I'm a part of I think range there, hmm they're trans-local communities so there interconnected in many ways but for the sake of just

being able to geographically place them I'm a part of a very strong artist collective, informal artist collective from East L.A in California, East los Angeles California as well as Son Jaracho fandango community Veracruz, Mexico and parts of Mexico, Mexico City. This practice of fandango ranges from many places, Mexico, but then also Seattle, Washington. I feel I'm a part of a community here as well, and north...northern California as well. So I have many, I feel like I have many places to go to many families, many sites.

CL: Can you talk a bit when and where and how that connects to your musical experience?

MG: Ok. I was born in East L.A in Boyle Heights, which is a little bit east of downtown L.A. and it's been historically known as the most transient city in the history of Los Angeles. So, the community is very transient, immigrants stop off there and then they move farther east or out of state ...you know it started off as a very, it has an interesting history. I was born in a musical family, my father was a singer, he wanted very much to be a singer of mariachi music. Like crooner hits and things like that at the time were very popular. So he was a singer and loved music and always playing musical records, right, vinyl and he loved all kinds of very famous singers now and so I think he was the one who instilled me of this idea of pursuing music as a career. I think my mom really gave music in a very different way, she was a more participatory, you know that I know that word right. She was very into teaching us all sorts of children's songs, wanted us all to sing together and things like that. Those were my first seeds of understanding and knowing music and in a certain way that would be the first experiences with music.

CL: So how do did you start performing?

MG: Well I guess my father always wanted to be a musician, his idea of music and pursing music was professionally, where at the time, you needed a manger and basically you became a professional musician. You had to get paid money you had too, that was the only way only way he could commutate to us ??? It was a way of experiencing music and the only positive way of doing it so. Even though he was from Mexico I'm sure there was other ways of experiencing music. And so he was only big on becoming a professional musician and so he, my father, couldn't do it because they kept having kids. There's a total of 4 of us he really kind of beat that idea to my brother. And I mean it literary at times. He was kind of like the Mexican Joe Jackson, you know the family, and really put this idea of professionalism into my brother's head as well as us. But I think in us it was more in passing. He wanted, I mean us as in the girls, in the family. I was the eldest daughter after my brother and my brother got all the attention and he wanted him to become a professional mariachi singer. He entered him into contests and soon after, when you know, me watching my brother doing his thing my father taught me how to harmonize with him. What they call doing "segunda." and so I would sing with him, I would do basically harmonies, but accompany him, I was like the girl little sister he would call out every so often and sing with him and go leave. Then he wanted to create a trio,

my sister also sings so we would all sing together. My father was really the one who got us into like, "you gotta do this" and "you gotta do that." My mom would make the skirts and dress and comb and do all the, basically what my father said, she was pretty passive at the time. So he just kind of spun out of control and was not that would [inaudible]. Although it was beautiful and I learned so many thing I felt a lot of ideas of about a professional way of being a singer, really came from him. And those formative and damaging and how the first time I experienced music to date. It's difficult to listen to certain Mexican music because it brings back all this pain. That coupled with the memories of my dad spinning out of control. He started drinking a lot, these ideas that he was a musician and that he couldn't do anything and what was success to him? That, the way he defined success right, was very troubling and that he never got to do this and so he basically let it all go and it got worse and worse you know, so it kind of brings back awful memories. It's funny how he left when we were 11, when I was 11 and he came in and out to visit. He became a bum and he died in the streets of L.A. So we never heard of him again, but those moments I think, even though they were traumatic I think they also set me on this course of first of all, not wanting to do music at all after that, until a series of other things happened, but it also, I think I'm very adamant of redefining what it means to practice music for myself. I see how that really shapes how I view these new experiences that have in music, really liberated my idea, and have helped me forgive my father and have helped me really realize how it really impacted, affected capital, how capitalism affected my family on a very personal level and the modernization ideas. Anyway I'm going around in circles, but it's this, this I've seen how these things converge with my father, and my family music, my father's ideas of success and things of that sort, how capital, I can see capitals clearly in my family history, and music and ideas of music, and success.

CL: So how did you end all of that getting involved with Quetzal I mean the band? Quetzal the person?

MG: Right, so you know I had once again, I feel like the godfather when I say this, have you ever watched the godfather?

CL: Yes yes.

MG: Ok (laughs) you know how like when you get out, but they pull you back in, you know. I feel like music is always sort of like tapping on my shoulder. Even after my father left, there were a couple of days, you know, whenever I never wanted to have anything to do with music and somehow, you know somebody I've had a friend like "Hey there's a chorus here, we're going to do a chorus, do you want to be part of the choir?" and I'd be like "Sure..." We go sing you know and have a great time, and suddenly I am in a choir, you know and I'd be "Oh god", so "ok great that was fun whatever um and then uh" and then I had a couple of instances where somebody said "there's an audition for a certain, for a band." You know a background for a band, I always did backgrounds for bands. So I loved doing that and I loved being part of a chorus and doing voices and harmonizes that what I did right? That's...and

that was a lot of fun and but then it also entailed you know, when you were a background singer for some guys bands they all you always be, they would want to sexualize you, to dress a certain way, you had to sometimes do steps he wanted you to do. He would come up to you and anyways this guy named Tolito, I'd never forget that but anyway I got fired from that cause I wouldn't wear the kind of dress he wanted me to wear and (laughs) so anyhow but it [music] would always find me then right? I had a friend I was going to UCLA in the Ethic Musicology department, I had a friend who had heard me sing in one of the Mariachi concerts right? and he said he was working with, as a guitar roadie for this guitar player named Marcos Loya and Marcos Loya, they were, Quetzal my partner now, was working for Marcos Loya as well as a guitar tech and they asked um, Quetzal asked Mark if I, If he knew any singers and so my friend Mark called me and he said "Ehh I have friend who's looking for a singer for a band." you know, and I thought he meant background singer, and I said "Oh yea sure, I'll do it, am I going to have to sex out?" and he said " No No, I don't think they're like that, They're really you know called Quetzal..." and I heard of Quetzal before, there was a different singer before I came along and Loved the music and I remember it was in Spanglish, and like I remember thinking like that's really cool and sort of spoke about my way of being and my identity I guess and then about a couple hours later, Quetzal paged me you remember pagers? (laughs) Quetzal paged me and then I called him back and we met the following day to talk about music, and I went with a tape that I had because I have been involved with different groups and I said, "Here's my tape If you want to hear it." and he's like "I don't need to hear it." and I was like "Oh god he's totally going to try to hit on me right?" which he did, but that came much later, but any how he didn't listen to it but he said, "You know, I know you can sing." and I go "Why?" "Cause Mark told me and I can just kind of tell." And I was like "Ok..." I'm not saying I can't sing you know, but I can carry a tune I said "I don't seem like your old singer though," and he was like "I don't need you to sing like the old singer I want you to sing like you sing." and that really was different nobody really ever talked to me like that and nobody ever told me "I want you to sing how YOU sing." because my singing experiences before were always people told directly tell you, how they wanted you to sound. I was very good at imitating people and imitating voices and ways of singing and you know I was always taught to sort of follow this along the singer I was doing "segunda" since I was a kid. So that was really a great experience, it was difficult I got really angry at him "Tell me want you want me do?" the first times we got together making music. He's all "Why are you asking me? You're the singer." and that was a totally other idea where I was a new idea I hadn't really you know came into that kind of freedom to explore what I do, what I'd would do with, so it was way too much space, I felt really lost it was stressful, But I slowly felt like before I knew it, I felt like I was developing something.

CL: So where along that path would you start song writing yourself? and how do you compose?

MG: So about that I would say I learned 2 songs that he had written and I changed one of the, the first the idea of composing was that I changed the gender of one of

them is was called "Chicanos skies" and I changed it to "Chicanas Skies" and that was that first time I had really, and he was like do it, that's great do it, so I was like ok and then under the 2nd song called "Pasa Montañas" that he wrote, and I loved that song to this day, I listen to it and I absolutely love that song and then I sort of get the idea of what he was going for, but even though he had a vision of what he wanted, or what he envisioned he was all, Quetzal has always been a person just kind of letting of what you want to do, I never hindered by, but he also was very critical like if he doesn't think you developed lyrics enough or whatever like if it seems like that's the first thing that came in your head or you know, so I think soon after that just learning the first album I have a couple of tunes I contributed, band and pretty much right away I started writing lyrics and melodies and arranging some of the songs.

CL: So what kind of ideas and feeling do you like to communicate through your work? through your lyrics?

MG: Well from day one, I think it has been always been about the things that inspire me are writers that really think of new ways of thinking about things not just in terms of love, but also about community and other ways of looking at the world. I think identity has been a big one of mine, you know identity, community, issues pertaining to women, god, stories about, like I think about my life but something in telling in a general way so that other people can relate to them, if they relate to them right? So being abstract but being real and the situations the human situations that take place. So long the songs have been about my father as well but talking about my father in a very indirectly way you know there's songs like "Vagabundo", for example, well nobody really, it's about my father, but it's also about this man that I met who use to make, he was an artist so he would basically, he use to teach arts after school program, and he kind of would remind me of my dad because he didn't need, he was always kind of dirty and grimy he use to basically come to work to the kids he would basically pick trash and kind of clean it and bring it to the kids and say "Eh look I figured out we could make you know little dolls." So kids would love it so they would make little dolls and you know if you saw him walking down the street you would think he was a homeless person you know? He had all these bags full of trash, other people would look at it as trash I thought it was wonderful that he'd create artwork out of pieces of trash, they were pieces of trash and that kind of reminded me, it made me think about artistry and how we think of art how we think of, how we value some art and now others and what are those forces sort of separate to these things and you know and again my father popped into my head and how he never found, validated himself he was looking for other people to validate him and this song was about my father but it was also about this man that I just so admired so much on how he thought and how he just wanted to be his own person. He didn't need anybody or anybody's grant to call himself an artist, that's what he called himself. He was like, and he was one of the first people that I heard talk like that and I was like "Wow" that was really cool so a song came out of that. But Situations like that things that on a daily basis you know that relate to bigger pictures you know to bigger situations.

CL: Who are some of your biggest Influences? …. Musically.

MG: (long breath)... musically, ok, so I would categorize it as vocally, lyrically, sometimes both at the same time, right? But I absolutely love in terms of voice and how they construct their voice and sound and things like that, I love Chaka Khan. That woman is, ahh, you know a lot of black female singers that I absolutely love, Chaka Khan, Aretha Franklin, man, who else? (sound). Gladys Knight, I guess old school artists, huh? I didn't think about that (chuckle). Ya know their kind of style. I love Stevie Wonder for both lyrics and vocal work and lyrical arrangement. I absolutely love lyrically, I love Joni Mitchell. Joni Mitchell is one of my favorite people that I feel freed me, how she tells a story in the song and I feel like I am a huge fan and a student of hers. ... gosh. I love bands. You know, Earth, Wind and Fire, Rufus- when Rufus first came out with Chaka Khan. And, (sound) Led Zeppelin, and you know, Sam Cooke. I love Sam Cooke for his lyrics and his way of delivery and a lot of Mexican singers. I love a woman named Rocio Durcal. I feel like I have fashioned my voice a lot after hers. Lola Beltran, Juan Gabriel as a songwriter and as a singer. He is an amazing songwriter. Yeah, those are the biggest I think Mexican and American artists.

CL: Who are some of the performers and artists that you have worked with that have particularly influenced you?

MG: Let's see...I've worked with Los Lobos, (nodding, smiling). There is another band that I absolutely love. Los Lobos, before actually got to work with them, I had always been a fan of theirs. Yeah. I've worked with Los Lobos, Susana Baca, I got to work with her... ... Ozomatli, ... I've worked with Aida Cuevas, the very famous Mariachi singer. Very good. Amazing. She kind of came out a little later than Lola Ventran and all the rest of them. I've met and worked with Lola Beltran and Yolanda Del Rio . These are all Mariachi singers. Gosh, top of my head.... God, I can't think of all the people right now.

CL: That's ok.

MG: Yeah.

CL: (inaudible) Can you talk about your relationships with women in the music scene and maybe talk a little bit about the Mujeres de Maiz?

MG: Ok, yeah. So, Mujeres de Maiz is part of an organization of women artists activists who, that I have been a part of from its inception. Its sort of like a concept of wanting to have a space and a moment where only women from all backgrounds come and share their work and their and their musical, their visual arts, dance, poetry, sculpture, theatre works, dance. So, it was, it's a wonderful... its about to be fourteen years since its inception. And it's.. I don't feel at the beginning that there were many women who participated in it. Many women musicians. Right? That participated in it. Now I see more, which is great and I feel like I've been a part of

helping some of them come out more of their woodworks. So there's many great musicians coming out. People like Marisa Rondstat, este Marisol from, from La Santa Cecelia, and there have been other musicians as well. And, all of which I have been working with closely developing their own projects or you know, just working on things together on songs or projects like mujeres de maiz or things like that. In our scene so, Mujeres de Maiz is really trying to expand. It's something that started in the East LA region. It's very... now its becoming one of the great social networks with computers and Facebooks and all of these other things, people are really starting to come out of all places. All mujeres all over the map. (Nodding).

CL: Can you describe how you were introduced to the son Jarocho tradition and how it has impacted your work?

MG: I was introduced to the son Jarocho tradition by Maria Elena Gaitan. And, Maria Elena Gaitan gave us a tape of Mono Blanco and Mono Blanco has been instrumental in pushing the Nuevo Movimiento Jaranero which is a new way of looking at the music and the dance of the son Jarocho. And, its a new way because they talk a lot about... they practice it through this fiesta called the fandango. And so, that's one of the biggest aspects about that movement. But Maria Elena- working with Maria Elena, accompanying her in playing the music of the son - Fandango, the son Jarocho, in a show called Connie Chancla. And, Maria Elena is a performance artist and she had given us a tape. And we... It was the first time I had ever heard the son Jarocho being played this way which was very different than the commercial style that we had been used to receiving in the U.S. and all over East LA or you know as Mexican Americans - the son Jarocho music, and that was really new to us. And then, soon after that, we have a friend named Russell Rodriguez who gave us a record by Son de Madera. And that just totally blew my mind. Their first record, this blue green record was amazing. I would listen to it and just like cry. And that is the first time I've really heard a woman sing on a son Jarocho album. I don't just like mean in passing and somebody, but somebody who had the kind of- I was gonna say balls but kind of ovaries (chuckle) that just like wow! Like, who is this person? And you know, I remember looking at the picture inside the album and looking like which one is she? Who would be singing like this and I tried to guess who it was and never would have thought it was Laura. And then I'd heard rumors that man, the woman singer in that band, she arranges, she wrote a lot of those lyrics, she does this and she does that, and I was just like what? No! That's... really? Wow! Ya know, I had these ideas of what a female musician in Mexico would be like and I was totally wrong! So... But I was a fan from day one! We wore that record out. And so many years later... That was 1997 that we received that album. Late '97. And, about 2001, 2002. No, 1999, we went to Mexico to participate in an encuentro there for Afro- (Transcriber's note: not sure what she says here) and we tried to look for them because we heard that they lived in Xalapa and its really easy to say, "Hey, do you know where blah, blah, blah is?" And they're like "Oh, yeah. They live over here." We tried to find them and they weren't there, but we tried to get in contact with Mono Blanco and Mono Blanco was in China or something like that. They were out of the country and I thought, "Damn!" So we never got to meet any of them. But somehow

we got in contact, we organized a series of performances and they, they, which, with Marco Amador, a very instrumental person in the Nuevo Movimiento Jaranero on the East LA side who also, organized a concert with both Mono Blanco and Son de Madera. They came to the Hollywood (sound) Giant and Fourth Theatre (Transcriber's note: not sure I got this name right) and played a big concert that was packed and that was the first time that real contact started. From then on, it's been non-stop. With other groups, them and other groups.

CL: So how did Fandango Sin Fronteras evolve?

MG: Well, after those initial meetings and bringing the groups, setting up talleres, making sure that we had this sort of contact sort of... you begin to sort of see a natural network develop. Right? So, we decided to just make a trip, organize a trip where a group of Chicano and Chicana musicians go to Veracruz, (clears throat) to talk with the groups that were interested in, or the groups that we already had contact with, but also to look to see these faces of the movement. You know, what was this? To let them know that we weren't... because there was a lot of skepticism right - that we were... where was this organization from? What is it? Who are these people? We weren't an organization. We were just a group of kids from East LA who liked the music and saw something really special in the Fandango that we just wanted to start a dialogue because we had an artists' movement, already. Right? There was nothing to take. We had an artists' movement, we thought there was a way of collaborating on things, and building sort of a network between both communities. One of the really important things to say about that, the importance of that, is that this kind of model of working with other communities was really given to us or we learned it from the Zapatistas. We had had, previously had an encuentro with the Zapatistas in Mexico, and in Chiapas, Mexico so I didn't even talk about that part. But in 1997 we had a five day encuentro that took a year to organize with the Mayan community in Chiapas. So we learned so much from that encuentro and ways of organizing ourselves in East LA and that, so this was sort of a snowball effect that once we got, once we met the communities that are in Veracruz and do fandango, at that point it was like you recognize commitment and a strong…the possibilities, you know in the way they practice music. For us, it was like a decolonizing tool. And to us it was a really strong message to us and we wanted to try to see, to find ways to build, to continue to build the relationships. So, anyway, so when we saw the fandango, it was like wow! This is amazing! We want to be a part of this. We want to learn this. We want to... and then, share it. So, that is what we have done ever since. And you know, trying to... And other people have recognized it too, of course, so there is this huge network now all over California, Texas, Chicago, New York, Minneapolis, you know, Seattle. It[s everywhere. It just seems like its a Zeitgeist where everyone's like you know what, music used to be... music practice used to belong to people. And so, I feel like it'w important and people are recognizing it. Yeah. No...

CL: So, what brought you to Seattle?

MG: Man... I am doing a graduate degree here, I am in the PhD program for Women's Studies and yeah, you know, some of it is logistical. I had a baby. I have a five year old son going on six years old. Going... he's about to be six years old. And, you know your music slows down, you know, you can't tour like you used to, and you need to find a stable- something stable for your child. So I felt like you know, what can I do that kind of takes my - what I felt like was really important moments, this, I felt like this knowledge base of music- what could I do that would be - that I could make use of that? I'd met a lot of intellectuals and you know- some organic, some not so... (giggle) along the way in our music ventures, with our band, we knew a lot of academics because we'd been interviewed by so many of them and written about, as a band, Quetzal. So I decided that we could write about ourselves. And we could write about the experiences and I could write about... I could contribute to the knowledge base on East LA music, communities, music as social movement. All of these ideas, just exploring the history and the experiences that I have had and I could bring that to academia. I came here.

CL: So, how did the Seattle Fandango Project come to be?

MG: Well (clicks tongue) it's a really organic process, I think. So we...once we got here, it was a lonely first month and we didn't have…the people we knew here was Francisco and we had met him because he'd come out to some of our shows in San Francisco and then when we would tour here in Seattle and he, we knew that he played son huasteco and he played some Son Jarocho and so we invited him over to the house to come and play. We'd say "hey ,you wanna play? Let's, let's get together and jam" and he's like "Oh, yeah sure." and so he'd come over and he's like "yeah, you know, I know a couple of people that like to play too and, you know, we should get them together," and I was like, "yeah let's get together." And so nobody really knew the protocols of Fandango and so Quetzal was saying, said, "We should just start, we should just start like Fandangos," and I was like, "Really?" I was like, "Yeah, okay. Let's do it." And so I thought maybe there wouldn't be enough people here that wanted to learn or it wasn't like something they'd be into, but we started during that time, Quetzal had just gotten a job, through Amps and so they didn't really have projects going. Amps is…so he worked for Amps and Amps is an American music partnership through the Simpson center and they didn't really, you know, they were kind of looking for things to do that were projects, I guess, and Quetzal decided to propose starting a fandango workshop or to bring one of the artist here, right, to bring Son de Madera. And he was, that was in the works. But in the meantime, we were sort of, we started asking for space and at the UW in the music building to teach the fandango protocol. And so that's what we started doing in April of 2008, my first year here, we started teaching...I start...every Monday we would teach the fandango protocol. And so we invited a bunch of people Iris invited her friends, which were Tere and Sierra and then everybody started coming out and we started teaching some of the songs and sort of elaborate...some people sort of new the songs, maybe a verse here or two. But they didn't know how the fandango worked and how to come on and off the tarima and things of that sort and so that's part of what we started teaching and so that we...and then once during that s ertime, we got

worried that they approved Son de Madera's visit and so we also wanted to make sure that we were ready for them so that we didn't have to start from scratch. And so it's just ever since Son de Madera came, they totally strengthened the idea of it, what it was. It was a month long…a month long training, hard core training from them and their time and at the end of that month, we had a fandango that was amazing. And people from California came to participate in the fandango to sort of inaugurate it and to show their support. They came on their own dime, showed up and it was an amazing fandango - really beautiful and it was like, wow, you know. That's a moment that I realized how the power of music and, you know, when you, when people come together like that, you know, I didn't feel so lonely. It made me think of, like, "Wow. Just about a less than a year ago, you know you feel so alone sometimes, you know, away from your family and from this community that I'm talking about - East LA and how everybody is, there, you know. It could happen anywhere, you know. But, I used to think East LA was special - I still do, but it's everywhere. We are all really important, and it's just really cool to see it happen and to see how it continues to happen, you know, until know it's all on it's own now, you know. Super strong and beautiful and it's gonna keep growing.

CL: Who is the next visiting artist that you mentioned earlier?

MG: Yes, the visiting artist after this - she spent six months here - was Laura Marina Rebolloso. She was...she is that singer that I just fell in love with on that record and it's Laura Rebolloso and she's been a great friend ever since we met, and we brought her down here and the UW approved it which was AMPS money and...along with the Simpson center and you gotta give them credit for that. That was really cool and she came down with all her kids and it was, she had an amazing time. And she gave 150% to the project, to Seattle Fandango and ev - time...ev - time to everybody and the kind of dedication she showed so that this community could really get going was just amazing. If it wasn't for her, I really don't think it would be as strong as it is right now. So Laura is that voice that came one day and supported the...this fandango project.

CL: So what are your upcoming plans musically and otherwise?

MG: I want to never...I never want to stop playing music (swallows). Because I advocate for participatory music and dance practice doesn't mean that I don't feel performance practice isn't important element of reaching people and satisfying one's own creative process. I think it's really important. I think it's part of our culture. And it's...it's important, and that it's also a way of connecting and inspiring people. I wanna keep playing music. That's one of the biggest things, and of course the way Chicanos operate in the world is like, you know, we engage and disengage and, you know, working through and overpower and, you know. So it's like, I wanna be a musician. I wanna be a professor and at...in the university if I can. If I...if...if it...if they're not...if...if I go to an Arwyn institution , I want them to accept my artwork as part of my tenure track package. If they do not, I will teach at a junior college so that I have more time...so that I have leisure time in the summer or whenever to continue

to create projects. We have an album under Quetzal coming out from the Smithsonian Folklife of...label Folk ways label. We're gonna continue to work on projects. Up next we have...I'm working on an album with Susana Vaca and just gonna keep creating and also mentoring. One of the things I think an artist from East LA that have gone on to do their own thing, or whatever...they didn't ever look back, you know, and I'm not like, back as in it's a linear process, but I think...I like to think of time now through...a lot of intervention, right...as a circular, spiral way, right. So one of the things I wanna make sure I do is that if I see artist that have come to me for example young women that say, "I wanna do an album. I wanna...I wanna sing, I wanna...I have songs and I wanna write," and if they're willing to put in the time, then I'm willing to put in the time to help out in whatever...at whatever capacity they want help in. And so I think mentor-ship is also part of my responsibility and so that's something I've done for…for Marisa and for other mujeres that want to sing or dance or, you know, in order to be able to continue that, you know, to keep connected to my community in that way as well. But, yeah, I'm gonna keep playing. I have to keep playing 'cause otherwise, you know...and...and continuing to, you know, I feel like I've slowly redefined, you know, what success is, you know. Sort of shed what my father had...had taught us and built something different for myself and a different definition and a different way of looking at music in my life, you know - that it's not defined by capital in those really strict ways that...and...and ridiculous ways, really, you know. I...I wanna define it for myself and I think that I continue...I continue to try to shed that. It's never...it's never all the way gone, right. It's always...it always comes back in especially as a woman in music begins to age as well. So...that's very different. I think aging for a woman in this society is difficult. Now can you imagine that as a musician, you know? As you begin to age and other people begin to come in and, like, you know, what is...how are women seen as musicians then? Like, can they...they don't have it anymore, they're, you know, whatev...whatever it is, you know. To me, I...I don't care. I could be 80 years old and I'll...I'll go play at a coffee shop, I don't care. It's not a big deal to me. Other people would say, like, "Oh, I'm too above that," or whatever. To me, it's, like, you like music or don't you? You know? It's like, you can't pay attention to what people say about you because you decide to take on whatever it is, play wherever it may be.

CL: It's how you measure success...

MG: Yeah. Right. And you know, you know...I say that because I have friends that...that...it's funny, even the friends that love you will say, like, "Oh so, I was talking to so-and-so. They say that Quetzal is done," or whatever, you know. They make comments like that and I laugh. I was like, "Oh really...well...it's not," I go, "We're still playing, We're gonna keep playing and, you know, we're gonna play other projects and we're gonna writer for plays," because we write for plays and we do this and we do that so it's like, we're never... it's funny how people will say that to us, sometimes I feel like, to get a reaction or to, you know "what is it?" you know. But I understand the mentality, you know. When you understand the mentality or how people see music practice or how people, you know...you...I understand the perception and the power that capital has to define things for us; to arrange

societies and to...you know when you understand that, then you know it's nothing personal. It's just the way people are used to seeing music, music practice, music success, music...our relationship to music...you know. It's like, that's part of what I'm trying to deconstruct in academia and in my own life, you know.

CL: Is there anything else that you want to add that we have not covered?

MG: No...I, no those were really great questions. I guess if I really think about it, I think one of the things that continues to inspire me about fandango and participatory music and dance practice - and we talked about this - is how it's really inclusive of mothers and their children, you know, where very few spaces in music and again, how capital defines it where, you know, music...music is enjoyed very few times in places where women can take their children, you know. It's either a club setting or late night or, you know, it's not accessible, you know, for people who have reproductive responsibilities. But I think that these spaces...we need to create these spaces now so that it includes our children, it includes older women, and it includes, you know these...these are really important things to think about. And that's part of how, again, capital organizes these spaces and...you know, really be very mindful of those things as...as...even as a performer, where we perform and make sure that I divide up my time and my energy in those very same ways where I'm very conscious of like, "Hey we haven't played an open space where people can lay down a blanket and listen to music...let's find those places," you know...and, so fandango is really important in that, you know, in that practice that always keeps that in mind. So, yeah. Mothering and music, you know. Motherhood and music are really important things to look at and unpack as well. Yeah, but other than that, that's it.

CL: Do you want to say anything about collective songwriting?

MG: Oh, right. Collective songwriting. Well, that's a...a...I think a really important thing to do. That's another thing that I'm exploring where I've been a part of it and that is writing songs collectively with other people where they kind of get to explore, like, their creative side without feeling like they need to be singers/songwriters or whatever. What does that mean? Right...where so often times, we take the creative stuff out of ourselves and say, "Oh that's not me. I'm...I'm no good at that," but, again, that's part of how it structures, right, where...where we are taught that there are certain people that are born with it and certain people that are not and that is also constructed. And we have to realize that and if we don't then we need to find ways to intercept those thoughts in popular culture and say, "No" you know, "It's we're taught that those things are not part of us" but, you know, I could think of, you know, a million examples of how we are all creative beings and we need to find spaces and places to do it. And so collective songwriting is a way that I try to just engage other people, "Let's write a song together," it's like "Oh God, no, no," but...and then some of the stuff that we come up with is amazing. And then what to me a song at that point is a piece of knowledge that's what's created collectively which totally defies all these other ideas of what knowledge is, where it comes from, who the one person producing knowledge...you know, just disrupts so

many things that I think are really important and it's inspiring. And then you learn from each other and, I mean...you know it sounds so hokey and flowery, but (laughs) when it's taking place, it's really, really cool and it, you know...and this song, we, you know...we have a song that we wrote collectively with the Zapatistas that we still do, you know, and they do it as well. And their groups have done it within their communities. So these things are being circulated, you know, these knowledges are being shared with other people, and they're...they're really...that's really cool, you know. That's a different way of looking at how we experience music and who gets to write songs, you know. And so...so collective songwriting is another really important thing that I...that I've been, you know, unpacking and I think it should be part of, of...maybe a way of getting academia and academics to theorize from a different perspective, collectively and that's a way of bringing their work...having their work touch down into a different place where the other people have access to this writing, you know, or these ideas that they're putting forth in scholarly journals or whatever, you know, that are more accessible, so...that's it

CL: Thank you very much

MG: Thank you guys. Thank you for doing this.

CL: Yeah, yeah.

MG: It's cool.