

By the People: Conversations Beyond 250

“Mariachi and Son Jarocho in Washington”

EPISODE DESCRIPTION

Humanities Washington brought two Mexican musical traditions into dialogue through performance and discussion at an event in Wenatchee called “Traditions in Dialogue.” In this episode, two of the event’s performers, Dr. Yesenia Navarette Hunter and Yajayra Ramirez, share the history and traditions of son jarocho and mariachi, discuss how their own identities and lives have been shaped through these practices, and reflect on how they are using this music to build community and connection in Washington state.

EPISODE TRANSCRIPT

Hannah Hethmon (Narration): *What does it take to keep cultures and traditions alive thousands of miles from where they began? How can living traditions like music and dance be preserved if they aren’t passed down from one person to another? How can folk traditions create community and a sense of belonging? These are some of the questions the founders of a Washington mariachi academy and the Hunters, a family of performers, have thought deeply about.*

If you stopped by the Wenatchee Valley Museum & Cultural Center in Central Washington one particular night this spring, you’d have heard them discussing these questions with each other and listened to them perform mariachi and son jarocho, two Mexican musical traditions.

And now, in this episode, you get to join in as we explore the sounds, histories, and living stories of mariachi and son jarocho in Washington state.

You’re listening to By the People: Conversations Beyond 250.

By the people is a national initiative developed by the Federation of State Humanities Councils and the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage.

Throughout 2026, humanities councils across the United States, its territories, and DC developed community-driven programs in collaboration with local partners. These programs explored 250 years of our nation’s cultural life and imagined our shared future.

In each episode of this podcast, we’ll revisit one of these inspiring programs to hear from the community leaders, historians, performers, and culture bearers who steward and preserve the living traditions that have shaped this nation.

The Traditions in Dialogue event that brought Mexican musical styles into conversation in Wenatchee was created by Humanities Washington as part of their WACultures Heritage Arts Apprenticeship

Program. The songs you'll hear during the rest of this episode are recordings from that event featuring our guests. And now without further ado, I'll turn it over to the humanities council and the performers to tell you more.

Violeta Martín:

Hello from Washington. I'm Violeta Martín, Director of Programs at Humanities Washington, our state's Humanities Council. I'm joined by Dr. Yesenia Navarrete Hunter and Yajayra Ramirez. Yesenia is an artist, musician, and assistant professor of history at Heritage University. She was a master artist with our Heritage Arts Apprenticeship Program last year, passing down the Mexican folk tradition of son jarocho. Yajayra is the co-founder and musical director of Mariachi Noroeste and Mariachi Juvenile Estrella del Valle. She participated in the same program two years ago as an apprentice to a mariachi master artist. Both of these artists have been deeply involved in Humanities Washington over the years, including through the Apprenticeship Program and our By the People Traditions and Dialogue event.

Yesenia and Yajayra, let's start with some context. Can you each talk about your tradition and share a little bit about where you practice it? What are mariachi and son jarocho, and what do these traditions sound like in central Washington? Yesenia, let's start with you.

Dr. Yesenia Navarrete Hunter:

Great, thank you so much. Thanks so much for having me. Son jarocho is music that comes from the region of Veracruz, Mexico, which is in the Gulf of Mexico. It's a tradition that goes back 400 years. It's considered folk music from Mexico, and it's considered Afro-Mexican music because of its influence from the African diaspora, indigenous roots, and Spanish instruments, and central to son jarocho is the dancing on a wooden platform which is called a tarima. So there's a lot of these heavy beats that bind the music together.

What does son jarocho sound like in the Pacific Northwest? That's a great question. I think of a lot of warmth. I think of a lot of voices, not only voices from the instrumentation, but voices from people and children and laughter and sometimes tears when we're standing in solidarity. Son jarocho sounds like people coming together after months and months of having been together rehearsing and practicing and when Son jarocho comes together in the practice of fandango it sounds like brilliance and shiny jaranas and maybe even another question would be what does it smell like, right? It smells like warm wood, cedar that's been warmed up by our bodies and food. So, the practice of son jarocho is really a practice that doesn't just take music for music's sake, but it takes music for drawing people in close. So it sounds like people being together. A fandango is where son jarocho is played and performed and practiced, but it's really the culmination of a lot of time spent together in other spaces.

[A live recording of son jarocho music played by Yesenia and her family at the Humanities Washington event plays]

Violeta:

And something that I love that you often talk about, Yesenia, in sort of telling the story of your tradition and sort of grounding us a little bit is your own sort of personal story about how your family ended up in the Yakima Valley.

Yesenia:

Yeah. I mean how my family ended up in the Yakima Valley, you know, as immigrants, in the 1980s working as migrant farm workers, traveling throughout Washington State. Something that I like to say is that I know the Pacific Northwest very intimately through the textures of labor and as a historian, like that's the work that I do is still looking at labor and practice and placemaking. But also coming to the music of son jarocho about 15 years ago with my family, really shifted the way that I experienced the Pacific Northwest as a practitioner and not just as a laborer. So definitely being part of you know thinking about myself as a migrant farm worker in my childhood and that impact that it has on dislocation and movement and the sense of belonging and how music and traditional music actually can relink us to place, even if the places that we're in are far from home. So yeah, son jarocho definitely has created a lot of opportunities for me and my family and my children to link themselves to a sense of belonging.

Violeta Martin:

That's awesome. And we're gonna get into that in a little bit, but I wanna turn it over to Yajayra. Tell us about the mariachi community in central Washington.

Yajayra Ramirez:

Yeah, so the mariachi community looks like a guitar, a vihuela, a guitarrón, a trumpet, an arpa, and a violin. That's what it looks like. It's composed of five main instruments, six if you include the arpa. Mariachi originally came from Mexico, and there's some historians say can track it back to Cocula, Jalisco. Others will trace it to Tecalitlán, Jalisco. But all in the region of Jalisco is where it originated. Mariachi became the national icon...symbol for the Mexican people. The president wanted to find something to unify the people after the Mexican Revolution. People were just very like lost in identity. Like, they had just came out of a revolution. So, they wanted to find unity and they found unity in this music, folk music.

The first historical like documentation of the word mariachi comes from a priest, a Catholic priest, complaining to the diocese about these mariachis playing outside the cathedral and being loud. And I think it's just that's what mariachi is: people in community, celebrating, playing music together, being loud and being present.

[A live recording of mariachi music played by Yajayra and her mariachi group at the Humanities Washington event plays]

Yajayra:

But in Washington overall mariachi you can find mariachi in schools. Well at least here in Wenatchee, we have a big mariachi community because of the schools. Like there's if there's no education of this art

then the art gets lost. So, there is mariachi in the elementary schools, in the middle schools, and in the high schools.

And I was fortunate enough to be one of those students to come out of one of those programs and to now carry on this tradition, and I have had under the instruction of master artists, through like different festivals that would come in come in, they took me under their wing to teach me what it is, why we play, like, the music, how do we play it correctly, and how do we bring honor and pride to a symbol, right? To the mariachi outfit. Like if you go out to Seattle and you wear your traje de charro, immediately you know what a traje de charro...you know who you know that that's a mariachi. You immediately know. Like there's no question— that's a mariachi. And it's because it's like a patriotic symbol of what the Mexican people are. And in an instant, you can transport people to their childhood, to their memories of their loved ones.

It could be happy memories, it could be sad memories, but I'm fortunate enough to be a part of this community that I get to consciously be a part of and be invited to take place into people's lives. And usually it's like milestones. People invite us to perform for funerals, for birthday parties, for their, like, grandma who's turning ninety. You know, we get to be a part of like these milestones for weddings, for baptisms, for all kinds of ceremonies. And I think it's so special that I get to do that for them, you know, bring joy, but also be a part of like this milestone. And I think it's like a really special place that I am so blessed, you know, to just even be a part of. So, mariachi looks like community, and us being invited to these like very intimate spaces, and bringing alegría. Mariachi is la alegría de la vida.

Violeta:

I love that, “bringing joy to the community.”

Yajayra:

Bringing joy to the community. Yes.

Violeta:

I'd love it if you could share about your families and their involvement in these musical traditions. In one of our many conversations about mariachi and son jarocho, someone, I think it was you, Yesenia, said something like, “community starts in the home,” and I have not been able to stop thinking about that. Can you each talk about how you started in your living rooms and have expanded from there?

Yesenia:

Yeah, I can go. I remember when we first started learning the music of son jarocho, we were going to weekly workshops in Seattle, in the West Seattle area. And my daughters were really young. Well, all the kids were really young. My oldest daughter was about eleven or twelve. And we inherited a tarima. So, we had built a tarima, which is the wooden platform that you dance on. We had made one for the community and then they built a new one and so we inherited like this small kind of half-size one. And we put it right in the middle of our dining room, and I used that as a canvas to paint on...I wanted to kind of engage with it in a different way. I'm an artist, a visual artist as well. And so, I had painted on it these images of women working in the fields.

And yeah, it was just a space where we could play music, gather around it, and that's when I really started to notice how quickly my daughters picked up the sound, the heartbeat of the music, and with so much ease, and it was really interesting to me because we typically are not dancers in our home...like now we are maybe many years later, but at that point dancing was not something that we typically put music on and danced around—it just wasn't part of our like family practice, but having that tarima in the dining room in a space where I could bring out my jarana, which is the small guitar-like instrument that's got about eight strings on. It's tuned like a ukulele, and it sounds really brilliant and bright and beautiful.

I could bring out my jarana and practice strumming, and my girls would come and hop on it and start dancing, and then I realized this is a really great way for us to create dialogue. So, in our home, I began to see my own daughters, 11 and 12 years old, 13 years old, as teachers, because I didn't pick up the dancing...the *cafe con pan* is the way that we teach the rhythmic pattern, *cafe con pan*, *cafe con pan*. That's the way we teach the way that you stomp, right? Your feet are using are kind of sounding out those syllables. They pick that up so quickly, and then I started thinking, well, they could teach me. And so, I would join them on the tarima.

And I realized so quickly that we had created a different kind of language that equalized a sense of power between us, that in other spaces didn't work, right? I'm still the mom, they still have chores, and we have responsibilities in the home. But on the tarima, that sense of power was equalized in different ways. Yeah, it was really beautiful. So, community really started there for me in that way that we were able to engage with the music in this beautiful way.

Violeta:

Yajayra, do you wanna take it from here?

Yajayra:

Yes. Yes. So the mariachi started out of our living room, and it started out of the curiosity of our siblings wanting to learn more about their instrument. Seeing us play and practice our instruments, they were like motivated. They're like, what are you doing? And I'd be like, Come, like come just sit and watch us practice. Because I had a group of friends, who I later formed a mariachi band, and we would get in our living room, and we would practice, right? Practice for our gigs, practice for events and performances.

And so my siblings were like, whoa, like I see that you are doing this. You're really like going professional, and you're out in the community. Like I wanna learn more. And so, my siblings started to ask me if they could join us and at first it was just like, just come sit and watch. And then it was like, hey, bring your violin. Like come actually like start learning. And then from there we started teaching them how to feel the music. Because you can play music but it's different from like playing to like feeling and interpreting that feeling onto your instrument. And when they were finally able to bridge that gap, I knew that their friends started to notice what was happening and they started asking them if they could tag along to our practices. They're like, wait, like can we join? Do you have a space in your living room?

And so, in the time, we were living in Rock Island, which is if you know Wenatchee, Rock Island is fifteen minutes away from Wenatchee. So we were driving kids and my like my siblings and their friends from Wenatchee to Rock Island to practice in our living room fifteen minutes, fifteen minutes back. And

sometimes we had to do multiple trips, like two trips at a time, to be able to get all these kids in our living room.

And we really saw that there is like a big need in our community, that kids really wanted to learn and expand, and there's like a lack of like support for mariachi music or just like music that has like cultural significance to these communities, and there's just there's just no support for them to expand, for them to learn, or even them to go professional if they wanted to. So, we started bridging that gap. And we started...unconsciously, right? Started to build community.

We just, for us it's so natural. Like in our household, and I think it goes back to how our mom raised us. When we have guests over, we are instructed, because when you are little you have to be instructed to like do these things, instructed to offer water, offer fruits, like if we have un agua fresca preparada, which is like a refresher, to offer that. Offer what we have because we are blessed to have enough. My mom tiene un dicho, which is "donde come uno comen tres." Like where we're able to accommodate one person, three other people can fit in that same space. And I think it's just going back to like we are blessed with a lot of stuff, and we have a responsibility to like give to others too.

So that's where it all stemmed from. It stems from the teachings of my mom and us carrying this like music, like, hey, let's bring everybody who wants to learn into the space so that they can be able to learn to express themselves. And so that's where mariachi for us looks like in community and it looks like in our home.

Violeta:

And from there you create you went on to create Mariachi Academy, and that's expanding. We'll talk about that a little bit more later. But I think it's so cool that parallel that, you know, you both started in your living rooms with your families.

So, we've had various discussions about your traditions, and one thing I keep thinking about is how everyone is welcome, everyone is invited to participate through various points of entry. There's a community your mariachi brings together, Yajayra, when you play at special occasions, like you were talking about earlier, and your son jarocho group, Yesenia, things like creating ambiente and convivencia are key.

Can you talk about what those terms mean? How have these traditions created connections between you, your communities, and sometimes even strangers?

Yajayra:

For us, el ambiente...in the mariachi, el ambiente is like the vibe, right? When we are invited to these important events and like milestones in people's lives. And a lot of the time we're like the only entertainment act for the night. And so, with that is there's like this responsibility to carry out, and to be the entertainment more than just...it's easy to turn on the speaker and have that be like the music that comes into a space. But in mariachi we're encouraged to take people on emotional journeys, journeys of self-reflection, mariachi music is very vulnerable with emotions. A lot of people use the time to express and honestly, secar, like release what they are feeling.

And that's why we are encouraged as mariachis and we have this responsibility to portray those emotions because in the moment while we're performing, yes, we are performing a song, but the

audience is able to reflect how they feel about a certain song. And a lot of the times these songs can be les marca la vida la gente—it it like marks them in their in their lives.

An example of that could be like Amor Eterno. Amor Eterno is a song of grief. It translates to “eternal love.” And a lot of times we play this song at funerals. But sometimes people ask that song for like a ninetieth birthday. They're like, no, “tocame amor eterno,” like I want everyone to know that my love for them is eternal. And people get emotional because when you're reaching certain parts of your life, you're like, my love is eternal for you. And you're allowing the person to like be reflected off of what you're singing to them. And I think that's such like a beautiful experience to be able to do.

And I think, Violeta, what else did you say? Something about convivencia? Yeah? Convivencia in mariachi is really unique porque we have a dicho with our mariachi. We have a saying that we do whenever we go to any presentation, and it's “El que la pide la baila, y el que la pide la canta.” So whoever asks for a song, sings for a song, and whenever whoever asks for a song, dances the song. And it's because we want them to take the time to not feel embarrassed because a lot of the times in our especially like in the day to day social structure we are encouraged to be polite, right? Like keep ourselves reserved, be in this box, and that's fine for society, but when you're at your house and you're living this experience, it's important to like let that go, you know, like those boundaries and that construct no longer exist because, we are as mariachi, we are putting ourselves in a vulnerable state by singing these songs, by portraying our emotions, so we in a way also like expect that from the audience. So, we encourage them to participate, to sing with us, to dance with us, to do gritos, which a grito—if you if you don't know and for our audience—is an invitation to express that feeling that you feel inside that you're like, I feel moved by your words. So, let me go ahead and express that in a way where it's not like disruptive to the music, but that is honoring the music too. A lot of the times when we're like going to a space or a performance that is like new for the audience, like they've never experienced mariachi, we will teach them and encourage them to do gritos because that's the whole point of mariachi is to have this like interaction, this interchange of emotions.

Violeta:

Yajayra, I have to take this opportunity to ask, can you teach us how to do a grito?

Yajayra:

Yes. Yes, I'd love to. Okay, so if at any point, you feel like I agree, you feel like all this like little energy, you wanna like release that...but it can sound like...we have different gritos. The most common one that you hear is [makes the sound of a grito] and that's the most common grito. And it's just like, this emotion is just coming out. There's also small little burst of gritos. People go, [makes the sound of a grito] and like, and it's it's people have very different ones. And if we're playing like music and and you like like what your partner just did, you could be like Échale guerito! or Échale compañero! yeah.

But yeah that's how you do a grito. So I encourage you the next time you see a mariachi, to do a grito. You're welcome and you're invited to you're encouraged to do it.

Yesenia:

That's so cool. My daughter, one of my older daughters, Deja, she dances for a dance company in East LA called Floricanto Center. And she dances folklórico and son jarocho and all of the dances from the

different regions in Mexico. And one of the things that they practice is doing gritos. And to me, it feels like that must be like the epitome of freedom to like just be able to burst out in that in that beautiful way. So Yajayra, thanks for bringing that in in this space 'cause I feel like I wanna go do some gritos after we're done here.

To talk about convivencia and the and the son jarocho. I think for me, you know convivencia I like to think about it kinda literally like 'to live with' or some people say 'to do life with people.' And the convivencia is kind of like the glue or the residue of what happens when you practice together. So, when people are in the same space and you're kind of shoulder to shoulder and struggling through trying to learn how to you know use a new instrument that I've never used before, or sing in a voice that I've never practiced before, or do a grito, you know, in the way that you're asked to be vulnerable, it creates this sense of belonging, this sense of connectedness, this sense of equalizing that sense of power, like I said earlier. So, for me, that's how convivencia grows. And you don't even notice it in the moment. You kind of look back and you're like, I have fallen in love with these people. I want to do life with them. I don't want to just have a fandango, I wanna invite you to my party and I want to have coffee with you and I want to, you know, do life. And so convivencia really kind of spills out of the moment and kind of covers relationships in certain ways.

And the music really lends itself to this. The music lends itself to the present moment. The structure of son jarocho is that the sones don't have a start and an end. They have an introduction and they have an ending, but the music itself and the lyrics themselves really lend themselves to the community in the moment so that you can create and improvise or write verses that mean something to you. And one example of those was a recent you know, earlier this year when ICE picked up Liam Conejo Ramos, that was you know, a story, so using like a son, El Conejo, that talks about a little rabbit that is, you know, this little rabbit that goes out into the world and is trying to be mischievous, and the community rounds him back up and I use that son in a community space that was not a fandango, but a space where we were thinking about our community, praying for our community, trying to activate for our community. That son, El Conejo, in honor of little Liam, was a powerful way for me to kind of extend and spill over this sense of connectedness and convivencia.

So yeah, son jarocho and the spirit of fandango and the way that I like to say that, the spirit of fandango and the convivencia that it can create also happens outside of the structure of the Fandango. And I'll just say one last thing. I remember doing a talk in Tri-Cities through Humanities Washington, trying to explain the convivencia and the way that this music has shaped my life and shaped our family's life. And I remember afterwards this woman coming up to me. She told me about coming to the United States as an immigrant in the early nineteen thirties and that when she came, she was about three or four years old and her grandmother also came. And she recalled as we were talking how she couldn't communicate with her grandmother because she learned English and her grandmother spoke Dutch. And that sense of distance and dislocation, the same one that I had talked about as an immigrant child, as a migrant farm worker, she resonated with. So convivencia like flavors all of these conversations whenever I talk about the music and the experience that I've had and the way that it's helped me to bridge my own connection to my sense of self.

Yajayra:

Yesenia, I love what you what you talked about in regards to losing like the connection between your identity and coming into like a new state or like a new country and not feeling that connection, like not

feeling the connection to your roots and feeling the disconnection within your community is so prevalent as a first-generation immigrant family. Like I think that the struggle is so not talked about and not researched enough. And it really damages like the identity of yourself. How do you feel connected to a country that you no longer live in? Your parents want to have you assimilate the best so that you can be successful in the country and at the same time honor that because you are different, right? You look different. And because you look different, you eat different things, you come from a different background, the struggle is hard. For me when I found mariachi it truly allowed me to be able to express everything that I felt inside. Through Mariachi I was encouraged to learn my language, to be able to speak it back to my mom.

I just wanna leave everyone with this idea. Without educating or passing down the tradition, it will get lost. And the effects that it can have on our society, on the identity of our kids, especially as first generation, is huge. So, I encourage you all to support the programs, the music programs, the art programs who are putting in the effort to pass the tradition down because without it without the education it will die.

Violeta:

I love that you you've segued perfectly into our last question, which is about the future of these traditions. Can you talk about can you talk about the future of mariachi and son jarocho in Central Washington? Talk about your visions for the future that these traditions play a significant role in.... there are these shared community spaces that we've been talking about that mariachi and son jarocho help build. What do those what do those look like in the future?

Yesenia (45:30.328)

I think that the music of son jarocho and the practice of the fandango will only continue to grow in the Pacific Northwest. When we started, you know, ten or fifteen years ago, it was a very small community. There had already been a community of people, a group that had been playing son jarocho in Seattle before kind of the founders of the Seattle Fandango project came, which was Martha Gonzalez and Quetzal Flores. But there was already a group of people practicing music and then when the Gonzalez-Flores were here, they started workshops, and then those workshops continue to this day, which is really, really amazing.

There are workshops that you know our family sometimes goes to, you know, once or twice a year. Sometimes there are special guests who come. Communities, like I said, kind of along the I-5 corridor throughout the Pacific Northwest will pull money together and bring artists from Veracruz or from Mexico City to share workshops and practice, you know, the dance or the strumming or whatever their expertise is.

So, there is definitely a growing community of fandangueros in the Pacific Northwest and actually throughout the United States. And I think that that will continue to grow because the music again, like I said, really lends itself to the community and to the space and to the moment. And so, it's a real agile type of music that can be shaped in that particular region where whoever is practicing it. One of the things that I see son jarocho already also influencing is like this younger generation.

And so, you know, my son and I were part of the Humanities Washington Heritage Arts Apprenticeship Program a couple of years ago. So for example he wrote a song called *Silent Spring* after the book called *Silent Spring* when he started studying environmental studies.

I see the future of this music and the future of the practice of son jarocho also spilling out into other genres and to other practices. I use son jarocho as a way to also expand other forms of artistry. So I have always been an artist, but it wasn't until I started playing music when I felt like a sense of connection to my sense of historical self, when I started to feel a sense of connection to a place, the place of Mexico, which I had left when I was five and have very slim memories of. When I started playing this music, I began to also release and express in other ways. And it wasn't until then that I started calling myself an artist and creating more and producing art in other forms.

And it also kind of launched me into thinking like, if I could do this, I could do all this other stuff. And that's when I decided to go back to school. I mean I was in my forties when I went back to school and I was in my late forties when I got my when I finished my PhD, which was just a few years ago. And it might seem you know pretentious to say like the music did it, but the music did it, you know, for me. What it did was create that sense of community and that sense of belonging and that confidence that really kinda launched me into these other things. So yeah, I think the future is great for any practice, whether... it's [voice breaks with emotion]...so sorry whether it's son jarocho or mariachi or painting or whatever it is that connects you to your sense of self, I think because of that it has the power to shape communities in really beautiful ways.

Violeta:

I'm over here tearing up too. So and I think really resonate with that of just the connection and belonging and you know, son jarocho is a starting point. So thank you. Yajayra, do you do you need a minute?

Yajayra:

Yeah, I need a minute. Give me a second. That was so beautiful, Yesenia. I think you said that like very well, and I identify so with it so much because we started up the Mariachi Academy. This time we started the Mariachi Academy July 9th, to and our last day of instruction is today, Thursday, July 30th, and tomorrow, July 31st, we're gonna have an end of the program celebration. And throughout this whole journey I was like, I don't know if I can do this again because it's a lot, like we're managing a lot of kids and I was really scared going back into it.

Where I see mariachi going in the future is investing into education. And I think that like the responsibility falls on us. Because like otherwise the music will die. People always say, like, I'm gonna wait for somebody else to do it, right? It's always like that somebody else. But I think that we are called in the inside to pass it down, and I think that we all have this responsibility to like to continue it. And through that we have to like go through this journey where we have to embrace this like uncomfortableness so that we can be like our like best selves to be able to pass it down to everybody else. And I think that like that's where I resonate the most with what Yesenia had mentioned, that it brings out the best in you. And you're like forced to grow, to embrace it, and even if you don't know what you're doing, like you're figuring it out.

And the thing about it, I think that is the most beautiful, is like the time. Like I have more experience doing this cause I've been doing it for so long. Let me teach you my ways so that like you don't have to struggle and have to go through all this experience to be able to be at the same point, you know? And I think it's like we're passing down the short the shortcut, passing down the information so that our next generation no tenga que sufrir lo que nosotros sufrimos you know so that they don't have to go through the hardships that we went through.

That's where I see mariachi. It's like it's our responsibility to pass it down. I see myself like doing this for the rest of my life, passing mariachi down and I don't hold any regret in my heart and yeah. So that's where I see -- I see mariachi just continuing to be a funnel of education to motivate students to be the best versions of the of themselves. Even if it's not through the music, maybe it could be through other forms of education, but giving back to their community ultimately. Music just makes better human beings.

Violeta:

Thank you both for those lovely words. I felt so much of that. And thank you for your work and everything that you put into carrying these traditions into the future and putting those feelers out for others to grab onto and, you know, also continue it. I love seeing that in your families and all the other people that you touch through your traditions, certainly my life. I'm you know, I'm speaking for myself here too, and I'm just excited to live in a Washington that I get to share with both of you and these rich traditions and feel like I belong. So, thank you for creating those spaces. That that's that means a lot.

Yajayra: Un aplauso. My my stepdad loves to say, he'd be like, "All right everybody, un aplauso." And then we all go [clap]. Just one.

Hannah (Narration): *Thanks for listening to By the People: Conversations Beyond 250. This podcast was produced by the Federation of State Humanities Councils as part of the national By the People initiative, developed by the Federation and the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. You can learn more about By the People at statehumanities.org/bythepeople or at festival.si.edu.*

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