The *corrido* is a musical form developed in Mexico during the 1800s and originally sung throughout the country. Although still popular in Mexico, over time it became known as “*música de la frontera*” (border music) because it was especially popular along both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border. This musical-poetic form continues to be popular wherever Mexicans and Mexican Americans live.

**Language**

The following elements characterize the language in *corridos*:

- *Corridos* are stories told in poetic form and sung to simple, basic music, much like English ballads.
- *Corridos* use common, everyday language.
- Although traditional *corridos* were always in Spanish, in recent years some have appeared in English as well, or have mixed the two languages.
- The audience, if addressed is always addressed politely.
- The tone can vary from sincere to satirical.

**Structure**

The stories that *corridos* tell, either fictional or historical, must be sung in the vernacular language of the people in order to be remembered (whether in English, Spanish or a mixture.) There is some variation in the poetic form, but most *corridos* have the following structure:

- 36 lines (6 stanzas of 6 lines each or 9 stanzas of 4 lines each)
- 7 to 10 syllables per line (sometimes the lines are repeated)
- Rhyme scheme that varies but most commonly uses an ABCBDB form in a six-line stanza or ABCB in a four-line stanza. (Sometimes couplets are used: AABB.)
- By tradition, the first stanza provides a setting for the story by either giving a specific date or naming a place.

**Content**

The traditional historical *corrido* told about actual events, especially the exploits of famous heroes or the tragic deaths of individuals fighting unjust authorities. When *corridos* became more commercially exploitable, some became mostly fictional. Today, a *corrido* can be about almost anything. These are some of the popular subjects:

- animals (such as racehorses or roosters)
- tragic love affairs
- criminal dealings, especially with contraband and smuggling
- migration and migrant labor
- social and political events
- the struggles of everyday life along the border
- assassinations or other violent deaths
- humorous occurrences or relationships
- catastrophes
- hometowns and regions
- miraculous events
- wars and revolutions
- local or national heroes