

CULTURE / ENGLISH EDITION

# The Price of Cumbia: Musicians Performing for the Far-Right Amid Electoral Controversy

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*The controversy ignites a discussion about the role of art within the electoral arena, reviving the words of Tommy Rey.*



Original article: [El precio de la cumbia: Músicos cantando para la ultraderecha](#)

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The final stretch of the presidential campaign has placed musicians in both closing campaign events and the center of controversy, particularly those associated with the far-right. During the past week, popular music—cumbia, ranchera, and rock—has intertwined with politics, raising questions about the role of artists in the electoral process, with events featuring José Antonio Kast and Evelyn Matthei garnering the most attention.

At the event for the Republican candidate, musicians such as Américo, Los Viking's 5, and Zúmbale Primo performed, while Matthei also hired the latter band and featured songs from Los Charros de Lumaco in Puerto Montt. In contrast, the ruling candidate, Jeannette Jara, gathered artists known for their socially and politically defined backgrounds, such as Álvaro Henríquez & Pettinellis and La Sonora 5 Estrellas.

The choice of cumbia and ranchera as musical support for right-wing candidates sparked controversy, leading the most criticized groups to defend themselves by asserting that their participation was strictly professional. Edson Núñez, bassist for Los Viking's 5, told *The Clinic*, «Our vote goes in the ballot box. If we get paid, we're there,» distancing their performance from any ideological allegiance.

The argument of “it was for work” has been consistent, as the co-founder of Zúmbale Primo, Álex Muñoz, supported the band's decision, stating to *La Cuarta*, «This doesn't mean we're directly supporting the campaign; it means this is strictly work.» This emphasis on financial compensation raised questions about whether popular music prioritizes economic gain over social commitment.

In this context, a social media clip resurfaced featuring the late Tommy Rey, a key figure in Chilean cumbia, who offered a perspective contrary to that of these

musicians. In the footage, Tommy asserted, «One cannot be among those who say ‘the right called me, I’m going to play there because I’m going to get paid,’ no. It has to be for a side,» adding that as musicians, their work should align with the political sector they represent: «We’ve always played for the leftist people,” he concluded.

The legendary singer’s statement juxtaposed political ideals against the reality of campaign payments, raising the question of social commitment. In this instance, cumbia, historically linked to a popular identity, was utilized by right-wing presidential candidates.

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**Fuente:** [El Ciudadano](#)