TRANSCRIPT OF AN ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

WITH

FRANK RANGEL

AUGUST 4, 1975

INTERVIEWER: GRANT A. KOOSBRUGGER

This interview was conducted as part of a series on the Mexican American in Minnesota.

Frank Rangel is an accomplished professional musician. Frank, better known as "Kiko" Rangel has become well known in the Twin Cities Metropolitan area as a band leader.

Expert in Mexican rhythms and melodies, Kiko has expanded from Latin Music Specialties to Blues, Swing, veritably all popular forms of music and can deliver something to suit everyone's taste in music.

In addition to his profession as a musician, Frank has a successful career working for the Minnesota Historical Society for the past eighteen years. He is a highly productive person from one of St. Paul's finest families.

This is a transcript of a tape-recording interview edited to aid in clarity and ease of comprehension for the reader. The original tape recording is available in the Audio-Visual Library of the Minnesota Historical Society.
Moosbrugger: This is Grant A. Moosbrugger interviewing Mr. Frank Rangel, at the Minnesota Historical Society, on August 4, 1975, for the Mexican American History Project, which is under the auspices of the Minnesota Historical Society. Do I have permission to record your whole history, Frank?

Rangel: Yes, you do.

Moosbrugger: Can you start out by briefly summarizing who you are, when you were born, and where? Can you tell us a little bit about some of your particular interests?

Rangel: My name is Francisco Rangel. The nickname for Francisco is Cisco, C-i-s-c-o. There is also Paco, Pancho, and Kiko. I got stuck with the nickname of "Kiko", so almost everybody I talk to calls me Kiko. My real name of course is "Francisco", in Spanish. In English it would be "Frank". I was born on the West Side, in an apartment on the corner of Fairfield and State Street. There were two apartments upstairs. On the bottom right, on the corner, was a pool hall. Next to that there was a little beer joint called the "Carioca Bar". Then there was a shoe store owned by Ben Mintz. We lived directly above the shoe store.

Moosbrugger: How would Ben have spelled that?

Rangel: That would be M-i-n-t-z. He still has a shop on Concord, if I'm not mistaken. We lived directly above him. In the other apartment there was a family by the name of King. They were a colored family. I was born January 21, 1936.
Ranfel: I was born right in the apartment. At that time it was typical for Mexican people to have a midwife deliver their baby at home. My mother and dad used to tell me that that year, January of 1936, was one of the coldest on record. I think it was something like 30 below, for a stretch of a week or so. We lived in that apartment until 1952, when we had a fire and lost everything.

Moosbrugger: You were about 16?

Rangel: Yes, 16. In 1952 we had the fire. The fire started down in the basement of the bar, a 3-2 bar. Of course, they sold liquor there, so it really wasn't a 3-2 bar. The furnace was overloaded with wood or something. It spread from there and ruined the whole apartment. I'll never forget that. Coming out of that fire, some of the kids from next door were coming out barefooted. I grabbed one little girl and took her down. We went to the next door neighbor's while the firemen were fighting the fire. We lost everything. I had just bought a new instrument and I thought that was gone, but luckily I found it. Everything was O.K. with the instrument, except for a spot of water that was frozen on it. I also had a Tenor Saxophone and an Alto Saxophone. They were all full of soot. All our clothes, everything, was ruined.

Moosbrugger: You had an experience being burned out?

Rangel: Yes. We didn't have insurance to replace any of our belongings. My dad, like a lot of people, wasn't carrying insurance. People didn't know enough about insurance, and we were renting. My dad could have bought a house someplace, but he just didn't really want to. He was happy in the apartment. Now to go back to when I was born, I was baptized, of course, at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church. We were living on the West Side. The West Side was just like one big family. Everybody knew everyone and anything that happened everybody
Rangel: If somebody died in the community, everybody would know right away. At that time, the wakes were held in the homes. Everybody did this. Funeral homes weren't really for the Mexican people. The majority would hold the wakes in their homes. All the families would come and they would bring food, coffee, things to drink, and all kinds of things for the family whose relative had died. Everybody would come. Everybody would know what was going on. I can remember going to the farm to work. I think Osseo, Minnesota was one of the first ones I went to. We went out there, and stayed and worked. We would weed the corn, potatoes, melons, and all kinds of other things right on the farm. Then when harvest time came, we would pick corn, potatoes, or string beans. Of course, I would come home on weekends. I remember the time when I bought a bike. I went to the farm, saved some money, and came back and bought a bike. I will never forget that bike, because I had everything on that bike you can think of. It was a Schwinn bike, and at that time it was $70 dollars, which was quite a bit. I bought it and I put windguards and reflectors on it. I had a little place for your knuckles.

Moosbrugger: A knuckle guard?

Rangel: A knuckle guard. And little lights within the spokes, red and green lights. I had one big headlight and two other little lights.

Moosbrugger: The works?

Rangel: Yes, the works!

Moosbrugger: What year would that have been?

Rangel: That would have been in 1951-52. I was taken to the farm when I was very young.

Moosbrugger: Was it a summer job?
Rangel: Yes, in the summer they would go out and work in the beet fields. Mexican families, in those days, would go out to the farm quite a bit. They would receive contracts for so many acres, I don't know how many acres it would be for, but in that contract there were so many acres you had to harvest in so many months.

Moosbrugger: You had to care for it while it was growing, plus harvest it?

Rangel: No, I think just harvest it. I think that was the main reason people would go to the farm. This would take place the last part of August and September. My dad also worked at the Cudahay Packing House; he worked at the Cudahay Packing House for 25 years or more. In our family there were six girls and two boys. Actually there were seven girls and three boys, but two passed away who I didn't get to know. I wasn't born yet.

Moosbrugger: They died at an early age?

Rangel: Yes, at an early age. Some of the girls were born in Mexico, and some were born here. My parents came to St. Paul in early 1927, I think. My dad got a job at Cudahay Packing House. There were a lot of Mexican people there. That was in Newport. My dad worked in the Hide Cellar at Cudahay's. I remember the West Side as a beautiful place where everybody knew everybody. There were fiestas and weddings. Everybody would get together and have a good time. In all communities there is some violence, as far as going to the bar. But the West Side wasn't really a place that you couldn't walk around at night. You could be out there late at night and nothing would happen to you.

Moosbrugger: There was very little violence, except for those that were looking for trouble?

Rangel: Yes, in the bars especially. That's where it would start.
Moosbrugger: But as for innocent by-stander being done in?

Rangel: No. The only thing that would happen sometimes was when someone else would come in from another area, like the East Side. They would come down just looking for trouble. I don't know, there were some people that would come from the East Side with a ...

Moosbrugger: A rivalry?

Rangel: A rivalry, or something. I don't know.

Moosbrugger: When you say the people came down from the East Side, would they be typically Mexican American Kids?

Rangel: No, there would be some, but more would be American.

Moosbrugger: Anglo kids. What schools did you go to in St. Paul?

Rangel: The first school I went to was Lafayette; grades one to six. From there I went to Roosevelt; seventh through nineth, from Roosevelt I went to Mechanic Arts; tenth through twelveth. I graduated from Mechanic Arts.

Moosbrugger: Would working in the fields ever interfere with your school? Was starting late a big headache for you?

Rangel: Yes. There was some late start in school, not much. But after graduating I didn't go to college or anything like that. I just got a job. In fact, when I graduated I got a job at the Court House working for the Internal Revenue on a temporary basis. A friend of mine was working here at the Historical Society and he was going to leave so there was going to be an opening at the Society. This goes back to about 1957, I think. So I started in this office and I have been here ever since. It's going on 18-19 years since I have been here. I started in the Library and from the Library I came into the Micro-Film. In 1964, I came to Micro-Film.
Moosbrugger: It was interesting to note that you had a black family living near you, the King family?

Rangel: Yes.

Moosbrugger: What are your recollections, were black people accepted in the community, and were other nationalities?

Rangel: Well, there were other nationalities.

Moosbrugger: The other nationality groups, did they get along pretty well?

Rangel: Yes. First of all, as many people have told you, this was all a Jewish community at one time. The Mexican people came at the very end, as far as Jewish people staying there. Then of course they started tearing down the flats. But up to that date, there were still some Jewish people. So a lot of Mexican people got to go to school with the Jewish people. The Mexican people would buy from the Jewish people's stores, and the Jewish people would buy and sell Mexican food, and things like that. I know my mother used to take care of the home, do the grocery shopping, scrub the floors, and clean the house for the Jewish families. A lot of people used to do that. The black family next to us was the King family. There was another one, we used to call him C. J. or something like that. Then along Filmore, it's called "Nagisaki" now, there were one or two families. There were only four black families on the whole West Side.

Moosbrugger: Did they get along alright?

Rangel: Yes, they all knew each other. There were no problems. There wasn't any sign of ... I don't want to say segregation but ...

Moosbrugger: Discrimination?

Rangel: Discrimination, yes. None at all. people didn't even think of that in those
Rangel: days. They just talked it over like...

Moosbrugger: Human beings?

Rangel: Everybody knew everybody and they were really nice people and there just weren't any problems, ever. I didn't even know segregation or discrimination existed. Most of the Jewish people, I can remember, came back to the West Side, after they had moved out. A lot of them moved to Highland. Now of course they are all over Edina and Wayzata. But they had five city lots on the West Side, I think it was five. And they would still come to the West Side on Saturday and Sunday mornings. Saturday was the big day for them. I can remember when I was small, too, that the Jewish families would called me into their homes. They say, "Can you change this bulb for me?" In their religion they aren't supposed to touch any type of electricity or bulbs. I'd take it out, or do whatever they wanted and they would give me a dime or a nickel.

Moosbrugger: Electric bulbs?

Rangel: Yes, electric bulbs. I met a lot of Jewish people. Like I said, the Jewish people were no problem, neither were the Blacks or the Indian people.

Moosbrugger: You people all managed to get along, right?

Rangel: Yes, there were never any feuds, as far as a bunch of Mexicans getting over towards the Jewish people. I can remember that we used to get a basketball team together and this all-Jewish team would come. We had to play them. We would win sometimes, but the majority of times they would win. They would come with their nice uniforms all the time. We would just come with whatever we had to wear. And of course within the game we would get a little rough now and then, but after the game we wouldn't have it out someplace, or anything
Rangel: like that. It was just within the games trying to get the ball from one of them, or giving him the elbow or jumping up for the ball.

Moosbrugger: They didn't feel any resentment?

Rangel: No. Now that we are talking about that, I didn't realize at the time but there was never any thought of this resentment. It was just all one big happy family down there on the West Side. We had Jewish stores. We didn't have any Mexican stores, at least I can't remember any Mexican stores. There was one guy, we use to call him "El Colorado", he was Jewish, but he learned to speak Spanish really well. He still has a store.

Moosbrugger: "El Colorado?"

Rangel: "El Colorado". They use to call him that, because he had a very red complexion. He still has a store on Oakdale and Sidney, "Manuel's Market". He handles Mexican goods. I don't know where the Jewish stores got the Mexican goods, but a few stores did. Then Coronado opened the restaurant and they sold a little bit of Mexican goods too. The only thing started by Mexican people seemed to be restaurants in those days. Not very many, of course "Coronado" was the first, I think. I remember there was another restaurant across the street from our house, I forget what they called it. Directly across from us was a beer joint called the "Tapped Keg", and down a half a block was a bakery called "Kessel" I am sure it was "Kessel's Bakery", and across the street was a store called "Skonicks", first it was "Garmans".

Moosbrugger: Garmans?

Rangel: Garmans, right on Kentucky and State. Then there was "Clemons".

Moosbrugger: Clemons?

Rangel: Clemons, he was quite a guy, a real nice guy. I remember we always used to buy
Moosbrugger: In those years that we're talking about, I know that there were certain civic leaders who played a role in keeping alive the traditions. I know that your father was one of the leaders who was very active in keeping alive the traditions and making sure that the young people were participating in developing their talents. Could you tell us a little about some of the things your father worked towards and how he got you involved and how you got involved and stayed involved?

Rangel: Well, the musical part of my life. The family was always musical. My mother would teach songs and dances to the girls. My dad would write plays. My dad was appointed Mexican Consul for St. Paul. He helped the Immigrants get their papers, and help them get settled. He did it all from the goodness of his heart. He didn't get paid for it. He helped everybody. In fact, on the West Side, there isn't anyone, maybe, that didn't have something to do with him. Because a lot of the people didn't know how to read or write, they would come over to my dad and he would write letters for them, and get answers for them from different parts of Mexico or Texas. They would want help all the time. I can remember the people coming to the house every day, and every night I would see somebody come in. He would come home from work and sure enough somebody would come over. He would sit down and talk to them, but they would always go in one room and always talk to him in there. Then I could see him always typing letters and papers. My dad was also secretary of the "Anahuac" Club, which is a big club and of which we have records. Anyway, the family was always musical, as I said. In fact, as the years went by there was one play my dad put on, it was always referred to as the "Rangel Family". Because at the time, I guess, we were really the only ones able to perform song and dance. Three of the girls played the piano, one of them played accordion and
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Rangel: all of them sang and danced. In fact, I can remember that I used to dance also! When I was young I used to dance the Waltz, Tango, and Mexican Hat Dance, all folk dances. I can remember my sister teaching me things to play on the piano. We had a couple of pianos in the apartment. How I got started going beyond just singing and dancing, and playing the piano, was to get started playing an instrument. My sister Eugenia was the one who started me. I remember one night she was already playing with some group there on the West Side, I think it was with Nick Castillo, Joe Medina, Henry Velasquez, Paul Castillo, Gregory Molina, and John Hernandez, John Hernandez was the drummer. They had a group called the "Rumbaleros".

Moosbrugger: Rumbaleros?

Rangel: Rumbaleros. It was under the direction of, I think, Nick. Nick had the group. Of course, Eugenia, would always get together with them at the house, always singing. We used to have a phonograph. And we made a combination, within this phonograph. We had a little recorder right in it. In those days it was a round mike on a stand, and we could record on it. We use to record records and everything on it. Songs on the piano, and a lot of guitars. At that time there were a lot of musicians who came from Mexico. They would be passing by through relatives. They would play guitars and some of the local guys were playing guitars too. They would always get together. The girls would always be singing for the fiestas. When people from outside the West Side wanted entertainment they would always call the girls. We would always go out to perform, in different communities, different section, different parts of the city. Anyway, getting back to my sister, she asked me if I would like to learn an instrument, and what I would like to learn. I didn't really know. So, I can remember one Saturday, my sister and Augie Garcia, who was playing "Congas" at that time, and Ricahrd Hernandez was playing "Timbales", and Watson was playing "Maracas", his name is John Ramirez, but everybody calls him "Watson".
Moosbrugger: John Ramirez' nickname is Watson?

Rangel: Yes, Watson, that's what they call him. Well, he came over and he was playing maracas. They were rehearsing. So this guy called "Lalo" brought a sax over. I remember him walking in and taking out the sax. I looked but I didn't really...

Moosbrugger: Know what to say?

Rangel: I didn't know what it was. All of a sudden he started playing it. I was in the other room listening to the group practice, and I started hearing the saxophone. Right there I liked the sound and the way it looked. So the following week my sister said, "Have you thought of anything that you want to start playing?" I said, "I'd like to start the sax." She said O.K. The following Saturday morning we went down to a store called Kestings Music. I can remember walking in the store. In a window display they had pictures of saxophone players holding the saxophone way up above the stars. I looked at it said, "Gee, look at that." I was kind of nervous when I went into the store, wondering if they would have a saxophone. Sure enough they did have a horn in there. It was a silver horn, a tenor saxophone. With the rental of this horn you received six free lessons. The following week I started taking lessons. The instructor's name was "Paul Zelinka".

Moosbrugger: What year would this have been?

Rangel: I started playing about 1953, I think. I was 16 years old when I started. I took the six free lessons and continued to take some more. My sister was a very big help to me at home because she would teach me tunes on the piano, and she would write them out for me. She would actually teach them to me. Just tell me what note or how the phrase would go. By doing that, I actually got trained. I trained my ear. What I mean is to play a tune without looking at
Rangel: the music. Just hearing a tune and playing it instantly. I like to do that automatically. I didn't even know this was happening. So I continued for about a year with Zelinka. From there I switched to another teacher by the name of Johnny Kavorik. Normally, in taking an instrument of reeds, it's the clarinet that's played first. Then you switch to a tenor sax or the alto. But I did it the other way. I worked tenor, then I switched to clarinet with Johnny Kavorik.

Moosbrugger: How is Kavorik spelled?

Rangel: Kavorik would be K-a-v-o-r-i-k. He taught me to play the sax a little bit different than the other guy. He corrected me a little bit. Then I became interested in the clarinet. Johnny Kavorik played sax, clarinet, and flute, so I started taking clarinet lessons. I must have stayed with Johnny all of another year. Within that year I remember one time this friend of mine, that was also playing sax, came over with a flute. He showed it to me and said, "Look what I've got, a flute." He said, "Do you want to try it?" So I grabbed it and I was just trying to get a tune out of it. I then became interested in the flute. So when I went to my lesson that Saturday with Johnny and I told him about the flute. He said, "Sure, I can teach you how to play flute if you like." So I bought this flute. It was called an Armstrong flute. I started taking flute lessons. So the total lessons that I had with sax, clarinet, and flute, might run into two or two and a half years. Those are all the lessons I had. I didn't go to any music school, college programs, or anything like that with music. I just took lessons from Zelinka and Kavorik. All of a sudden, I just started playing. Whenever I would hear that a band was coming to town, from out of town, I would go to listen to them. My sister kept teaching me songs. One day she called this one guy who had a band, Joe Medina. He was in need of an alto sax. She invited him
Rangel: to our house. She had already been playing with another group, but then Joe Medina started getting another group and he came over to listen to me. If I can remember, I played a couple of songs for him, he was just listening. I didn't really get nervous, I just played. He liked the way I played, so before I knew it I was rehearsing with his band. There were three saxophones, two trumpets, one drum, one guitar, bass, and one piano. This goes back before I went to Johnny Kavorik. This was only a matter of two or three months, when I was doing this. I started playing and I knew what I was doing, but not really to the fullness of knowing all the different types of beats, and rests within the music that was written. He was using actual charts, not printed. So what I did was to depend on him by listening to him. The part that he had and my part were the same, but only in harmony. So I would follow him to get through it. Before I knew it, I joined the Union. I was 16 years old when I joined the Union. This was after three or four months that I had been playing. Three of us joined the Union together. I can remember my first job. It was with Joe Medina in a group he called "The Joe Medina Band". I was kind of nervous because that was my first dance. It was a Mexican Dance. He brought out the charts and then he brought out another folder and he said, "These are some new tunes I just wrote, so we'll do them tonight." I had never seen them before, so I really got nervous because he brought some new things right in front of me. Well, I got through the night. And I was O.K. I kept studying. All of a sudden he broke up the group. Then my sister and I, well, my sister was the leader, got a group together. We called it "Las Siete Notas."

Moosbrugger: What sister was this?

Rangel: Eugenia. She lives in California now, but up to the time she left she was still playing the piano. Then all of a sudden Joe Medina came back with a big band, a big 12 piece band, and asked me if I wanted to play with his band. So, then I played some jobs with him. We still had our group, my
Rangel: sister's group. Then she got married and she left for California, so I took over the group. We were playing all Mexican dances mostly, and Mexican weddings.

Moosbrugger: So this would have been in the late 50's?

Rangel: Yes, '55, '56, '57, '58, and a little bit of 1959 maybe. Then what I did was I actually got out of playing for the Mexican dances because I started to venture into new types of music, new to me. By this I mean I went into American music. I remember one Saturday the drummer brought over this colored fellow. He played a lot of blues. He played the piano until we started rehearsing at the house. I was listening to him and I kind of fell into it and actually started to improvise. I didn't know what I was doing, but I felt it and it sounded alright. I would kind of go by the phrasing that he did and I just learned how to do that. All of a sudden, I started playing some jobs with him, some American music. At that time popular tunes were, "Blue Moon", and "Jumping with Symphony Sid".

Moosbrugger: Which one?

Rangel: "Jumping with Symphony Sid". That was a blues line that was popular. Another one that was pretty popular at that time was "Moodies Mood for Love". It actually was a version taken from "I'm in the Mood for Love", but a whole new version.

Moosbrugger: A whole new rendition?

Rangel: Yes, a rendition or improvise on it. There were a lot of others that were popular like, "Red Top". So I learned how to play some tunes. I still had the group though.

Moosbrugger: "Las Siete Notas?"
Rangel: "Las Siete Notas". Then we broke up the group and I got a big group together. A big 12-15 piece group: four saxophones; two trumpets; piano, bass, drums, guitars. I started to build a library around my sisters. All three of them were singing in a group, then Eugenia left, so I had two; I had Mary and Geneve. I bought a complete library of their music. We would play in a big group, and I brought music just for them. It was very nice, really nice, having a big group like that.

Moosbrugger: What name did you go by then?

Rangel: Under "Kiko Rangel", that's when I changed it.

Moosbrugger: That would have been the early 1960's?

Rangel: Early '60's yes. It goes into the early '60's, from, oh, 1959 I think was the first year.

Moosbrugger: You were doing some radio work by then?

Rangel: No, we were doing mostly just "fiestas". We would be called to some weddings and some dances. At that time it was very hard to book the 15 or 12 piece group because it was a lot of money in those days to pay for all the musicians. I let that go and then I got into the smaller group. In 1959, I recorded one album. One side was Greek and the other side was Latin-American. I still have the album at home. We also recorded other Latin-American tunes. We catered more to Latin music than Mexican music on the album. Then I just continued on stretching out to different types of music. I ended up, of course, with Mexican music. I played blues at the time. We used to play a lot of Jazz. We started doing a light Jazz thing. I also got involved in playing "Greek" music. I used to travel all over Minnesota, Iowa, Michigan, Nebraska, and North Dakota; mostly Iowa, there are a lot of Greek people in Iowa, doing Greek weddings. Greek
weddings were very hard, very different. Then I started playing with all kinds of groups. Different groups; some colored groups. Groups that I had never played with. I just fell in with them because I knew the music. So, actually I started getting away a little bit from playing the Mexican music, the Mexican dances. Only for the reason that the more I worked, the more work I got. At first it was like a hobby, but, all of a sudden the money part just took over and now I depend on it. That's what happens. Then I got into a "Calypso" group, they also played folk music. I recorded two albums with this gentleman by the name of Paul. We recorded two albums with sax and flute. Then I recorded a couple of 45's. I did another recording with "Los Valentino's" from the Radisson South. They are appearing there now. I just finished doing an album of "Lebanese" music, which is really "Syrian" not Lebanese'. This belly dancer wanted a record for her studio. So, we did a recording. The record is out now, I have a copy at home. Just last week, we were doing another recording of more "Lebanese" music. This tape was sent to New York and the guy liked it. So, he's going to print a record and this record is going to go nationwide.

Moosbrugger: This is a publisher?

Rangel: Yes, an international publisher.

Moosbrugger: He is going to promote it internationally?

Rangel: Internationally. Now you go to the stores and you see all these records at a special price. You've never heard of the people, but, yet you buy the records. This is what I mean. They are going to put the record into something like that and it is going to go international.

Moosbrugger: Promotion?

Rangel: Promotion. I have done recordings, but I have not yet done anything for our Mexican-American Oral History Project, Minnesota Historical Society.
Rangel: group. One of these days I am going to make a record. Not really an album, I would just like to have a tape and a record made for myself and for the group. Just to remember. You know, as I get old to remember back to the days when I use to play, or something like that. Just to have it.

Moosbrugger: A keepsake?

Rangel: Yes, a keepsake. That is what I would like to have. I still get calls to play for Mexican weddings and other Mexican doings. My work now with the Mexican people is not as much as before, but I still get called. The reason is that the music I play, I can change if I want to, not always play one type. Nowadays girls are marrying American boys or the Mexican boys are marrying American girls. So they want music on both sides. They want Mexican music and American music. So this is where I come in and they call me. There are other groups, there are good groups around here, Mexican groups, but they only play Mexican music. They can't play anything else. I'm just saying that there are both sides to the music. There are a lot of good American groups, but they don't play Mexican music.

Moosbrugger: Yes, they don't know how to do both.

Rangel: So the music that I'm doing now is American music, Latin-American, and Mexican music.

Moosbrugger: What are some of the different basic types, for instance the Basanova, the Cha Cha?

Rangel: O.K. I can break that down. Mexican music is: Ranchera, Bolero, (Bolero-Ranchera) is what they call it, Wuaapango (which is a rhythm like the Mexican Hat Dance) the first part of it, and the Valz, you know Waltz, and that is pretty much the
Rangel: Mexican music. Of course, there are other rhythms, but they're not for dancing. The Latin-American music is: The Bolero, Cha Cha, Mambo, Samba, Basanova, Tango, Marenge, and Cumbia. That pretty well covers the Latin music. The American music: Fox Trot, Waltz, and Swing, they would call it. You call the type of music that you want, if I can do it, why I will do it, if I don't know it, I'll try to learn it. We play for a lot of the studio dance groups and there you have to play all types of rhythms because they learn these through their teachers, and then they go out to dance. We have been playing parties right now, every Friday, for Fred Astaire. We have been playing all or most of the Arthur Murray parties. So my music really stretches out to two different varieties. The bookings that I have now will run through October. These fall two, three, and four times a week. That is just right. Plus sometimes I study things in some culture lesson. But the music part I kind of stretched more than usual, because I think you can master any type of music, not really master it but have an idea, if you are musical you can do all this. I think it is a challenge. It is nice to conquer, if you can conquer it.

Moosbrugger: Have some skills?

Rangel: Yes, skills with different music, not just stay within one type. As far as styles go, I just keep the same style that I've had for the Mexican music. Right now what's very popular around here, is the Texas style music which has a slower beat, and gives more emphasis on the up-beat, just so you can feel it. I still stick to folk type. The Mariachi type music, I don't have the sound, but the tunes are that type. I haven't changed, because I don't really see any need for it. I don't want to change my style. It's been going o.k., so I just leave it as it is. We get a lot of programs and the family is still very active. My sisters sing at the dances, and they sing and I play the flute at church. We still get calls for a lot of programs, and we put on shows for Mexican music and Mexican dances. So, we are still pretty active, involved in things.
Moosbrugger: We didn't cover your family life. Are you married? Do you have any children?

Rangel: Yes, I am married and I have four children of my own. My wife had been married before and had four children, so we have a total of eight children. Three are now married. In all, we have four boys and four girls. I was 26 years old when I got married. That would be July 3, 1962. I also have my wife involved now, she sings with the group. I have my sister Geneve, who also sings with the group. My sister, Mary, used to sing with us, but now she's involved quite a bit in teaching folk dancing. The family also goes into quite a variety of music. Toward Christmas my dad and mother would teach the songs to the kids and possibly we would teach it to the other children. We would put on a "Posada" at Christmas time. There was always something to do, put on a dance, write a play, or perform. We all did a passion play one time, a full complete passion play. It was really, really beautiful. I remember doing it when I was young. I had the lead part in one of them, and there was music involved always. To this day there is still music. After all those years going back, we still get calls to play and we are still involved in that. I hope we can keep it up, because it is really beautiful.

Moosbrugger: It adds a lot to your life, a lot of richness doesn't it?

Rangel: Yes, very much so. The way that the Mexican community or the Mexican people can go out and perform to the American people to show them that we have talent. To show them that we are not just the Mexican people, we are doing something, keeping our culture and performing and doing a good job, having a good home, and trying to bring up the name of the Mexican people, wherever they are. Just trying to make a good impression on everybody.

Moosbrugger: Show where you are...

Rangel: Show that the Mexican people are not just here, they are here and involved.
Moosbrugger: Do you do anything, you and your wife, to keep this heritage alive for your own children? The customs?

Rangel: The majority of the children of my sisters' and my brother are still kept within the family. I used to have mine involved, not much now, but I will get them involved. My nephews and nieces have kept within the family the dances up. My sister Juanita is another one that also has a dance group. It is smaller and younger, but still she is in charge of it. It's kept up through the nieces, now the nieces' children will be taught. Some generations to come will still have the Rangel name, and the family will continue the same heritage and tradition.

Moosbrugger: Carrying on the tradition?

Rangel: Yes, the dances, and song. My niece, Becky Moran, is in Mexico right now. She is actually taking lessons from "Amelia", of the Ballet Folklorico, which is really nice. I hope, I am sure, that Becky will continue here, when she gets back. She will have a lot of new ideas. I'm sure that she'll get together with my sister Mary. Between both of them, I'm sure they'll work it out.

Moosbrugger: Continue on with the program.

Rangel: I'm pretty proud of that. Mary did a beautiful job with those kids. All my nephews and nieces were in dancing, plus a lot of other friends. Whoever is interested can learn the dances. We have a lot of kids. When they perform they do a beautiful job, a very professional job, they are amateurs, but they to a professional job. They really study, they really get the stuff down. I was really very impressed.

Moosbrugger: Is there anything you would like to leave for the future, any advice for your children or their children's children?
Rangel: Well, I would like to see the traditional dancing continue on, still let the American people know that we are keeping our customs and traditions, that there's still song and dance left around, that we're not all just going to be business like, or keep to ourselves. Spread out the word that we're not just...

Moosbrugger: Not all work and no play?

Rangel: Yes, let us also enjoy life, with song and dance like the others; like the Germans, Swedish, and Polish, they all left traditions with their generations. Especially the music. They kept within their generation, and I'm sure that it will continue on. I would like to see the younger people get involved in music. Most of the stretcher instruments though, like piano players, trumpets, violins, things like that.

Moosbrugger: There is a need for more musicians?

Rangel: There are a lot of kids taking up instruments and that I'm glad to see. I hope that it will continue on. They will always have some type of Mexican group down here that we can rely on to show what we have. Professional or amateur, but there will be one. A lot of those other stories I can go back to, but I think this will give you a general idea of our background.

Moosbrugger: Well, thank you very much for the interview, Kiko.

Rangel: You're welcome.