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Letter From the Chair

Dear Delegates,

I hope this letter finds you well. My name is Mariam Muradyan, and I am honored to serve as your chair for the Organization of American States (OAS) committee at this year's Model United Nations conference. I am currently a sophomore in college, double majoring in Psychology and Philosophy, and I actively compete on the collegiate MUN circuit.

The OAS committee plays a crucial role in fostering dialogue and cooperation among the nations of the Americas. This year, our focus will be on "Cultural Unification through Music and Television." This topic provides a unique opportunity to explore how cultural expressions can bridge divides and foster a sense of unity among diverse populations.

As delegates, your active participation and thorough preparation are crucial for the success of our committee. Here are a few guidelines to help you prepare:

- **Research:** Conduct extensive research on your assigned country's cultural policies, musical traditions, and television programming. Understanding your country's stance and contributions to cultural unification will be essential.
- **Position Papers:** Prepare a position paper outlining your country's perspective on the agenda topics. This should include an analysis of current challenges and proposed solutions.
- **Engagement:** Be ready to engage in thoughtful debate, collaborate with fellow delegates, and negotiate resolutions that reflect a commitment to cultural unity.

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I am excited to see the innovative ideas and solutions you will bring to the table. Your dedication and enthusiasm are vital to the success of our committee. If you have any questions or need further assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Best regards,

Mariam Muradyan

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Committee Description

The Organization of American States (OAS) is a regional organization that brings together the countries of the Americas to promote solidarity, cooperation, and peace across the continent. Founded on April 30, 1948, with the signing of the Charter of the OAS at the Ninth International Conference of American States in Bogotá, Colombia, the OAS serves as a key forum for multilateral dialogue and action in the Western Hemisphere.

The OAS has its roots in the Pan-American Union, an earlier organization dating back to 1890. The transition to the OAS marked a commitment to a more structured and formalized approach to regional collaboration, especially in the context of the post-World War II environment and the emerging Cold War dynamics. The founding principles of the OAS are enshrined in its Charter, which emphasizes the promotion of democracy, human rights, security, and development.

Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the OAS consists of 35 independent states of the Americas, including 34 sovereign nations in North, Central, and South America, as well as the Caribbean. Notably, Cuba is a member state but has been excluded from active participation since 1962 due to political differences and regional tensions, although recent years have seen some efforts towards reintroducing Cuban participation.

The organizational structure of the OAS includes several key components: the General Assembly, the Permanent Council, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and various specialized conferences and committees. The General Assembly is the supreme decision-making body and meets annually to set priorities and policies. Each member state has an equal vote (with the exception of Cuba, which is not allowed

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to participate through voting), and decisions are typically made by majority rule, though some issues require a two-thirds majority.

The Permanent Council, composed of ambassadors from each member state, meets regularly to discuss and manage ongoing issues and operations. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) plays a critical role in monitoring and promoting human rights across the region, often investigating allegations of human rights abuses and making recommendations to member states.

The overall scope of the committee will focus on the topic of furthering unity within the OAS, specifically in terms of collaboration and culture. In a diverse region marked by varying political landscapes, economic conditions, and cultural identities, fostering a sense of unity is paramount for addressing common challenges and advancing shared goals. The committee will explore strategies to enhance cooperation among member states, promoting initiatives that bridge cultural divides and build mutual understanding. Emphasizing cultural diplomacy and collaborative projects, the committee aims to strengthen the bonds between nations, creating a more cohesive and resilient organization. By focusing on unity through collaboration and cultural exchange, the committee will work towards a more integrated and harmonious OAS, capable of effectively responding to the needs and aspirations of all its members.

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Topic 1: Music and Art

Music and art have long been powerful tools for promoting cultural exchange and fostering a sense of unity within the diverse societies of the Americas. The vibrant cultural landscapes of the Americas are deeply enriched by the diverse traditions of music and art that span the continent. From the rhythmic beats of Caribbean music to the evocative murals of Latin America and the dynamic jazz scenes of North America, the cultural expressions of the region are both varied and profound. As the Organization of American States (OAS) seeks to foster unity and cooperation among its member states, promoting music and art emerges as a powerful tool to bridge cultural divides and strengthen communal bonds. This topic will explore how the OAS can support local artists, encourage artistic collaboration across the Americas, and consider the creation of a regional music competition akin to Eurovision. By focusing on these aspects, the committee aims to highlight the role of cultural exchange in building a more cohesive and resilient regional identity.

Past Significant Music and Art Cultural Events

Throughout history, several significant cultural movements and events have shaped the artistic identity of the region. The Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s in the United States, for example, was a cultural movement that celebrated African American cultural expression through music, literature, and art. Jazz and blues, genres born out of African American communities, became globally influential, highlighting the power of music to transcend boundaries and bring people together. The Harlem Renaissance fostered a sense of pride and identity among African Americans, which resonated with

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marginalized communities throughout the Americas, inspiring similar movements and cultural expressions.

In Latin America, the Mexican Muralism movement of the early 20th century, led by artists like Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, and David Alfaro Siqueiros, sought to create art that was accessible to the public and reflective of social and political messages. These murals not only beautified public spaces but also promoted cultural pride and awareness of social issues. Moreover, the movement had a lasting impact on the international art scene. It inspired artists worldwide to explore the potential of murals and public art as mediums for social change. The themes and techniques developed by Mexican muralists were adopted and adapted by artists in various countries, contributing to a global appreciation of the power of public art.

Carnival in Brazil is another prime example of cultural significance in the Americas. This annual festival, renowned for its music, dance, and elaborate costumes, showcases the country's Afro-Brazilian heritage and brings together millions of people in a celebration of cultural unity. Carnival provides a space for reflection and dialogue on topics such as politics, race, and social justice, fostering a sense of community engagement and collective consciousness. Beyond its cultural significance within Brazil, Carnival holds broader implications for the Americas as a whole, serving as a beacon of cultural unity and exchange. Each year, millions of tourists from around the world flock to Brazil to partake in the festivities, contributing to a global celebration of diversity and inclusivity. Moreover, Carnival has inspired similar celebrations and cultural events throughout the Americas, from the Mardi Gras festivities in New Orleans to the Caribbean carnivals in Trinidad and Tobago and beyond. These events not only showcase the vibrant cultural heritage of their respective regions but also serve as

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platforms for intercultural dialogue and exchange, promoting understanding and appreciation across borders.

These historic cultural events and movements across the Americas have demonstrated the power of music and art to transcend boundaries, foster unity, and amplify marginalized voices. The OAS can capitalize on these rich artistic traditions by facilitating collaborative music and art projects that bring together artists from across the Americas

Issues

Despite the rich cultural heritage, several issues hinder the full potential of artistic collaboration and cultural unity in the Americas:

1. **Lack of Funding:** The issue of insufficient funding poses a significant barrier to artistic collaboration and cultural unity in the Americas. Many artists, particularly those from marginalized communities or less economically developed regions, struggle to secure adequate financial support for their creative endeavors. This lack of funding not only impedes their ability to produce and share their art but also perpetuates cycles of inequality and exclusion within the cultural sector. Without access to resources such as grants, scholarships, and arts funding initiatives, talented individuals are often forced to abandon their artistic pursuits or compromise their creative vision, undermining the richness and diversity of cultural expression within the region.

2. **Limited Platforms for Exposure:** Local artists across the Americas face challenges in accessing platforms that can provide them with regional or international visibility. While globalization has facilitated greater connectivity and access to information, many

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emerging artists still struggle to break into mainstream cultural markets. This lack of exposure not only hinders their professional development and artistic growth but also limits the potential for cultural exchange and collaboration. Without adequate platforms for showcasing their work, artists are unable to connect with audiences beyond their immediate communities, stifling the cross-cultural dialogue and innovation that are essential for fostering cultural unity and understanding.

3. **Cultural Dominance:** The dominance of certain countries or cultural centers within the Americas can overshadow the voices and perspectives of others, leading to an imbalance in representation within the cultural sphere. Western-centric narratives and commercial interests often prioritize the cultural output of more economically powerful nations, relegating the contributions of smaller or less influential communities to the margins. This cultural dominance perpetuates inequalities of power and privilege, reinforcing hierarchies of artistic value and stifling the diversity of cultural expression within the region. As a result, artists from underrepresented backgrounds or marginalized regions may struggle to gain recognition or support for their work, perpetuating cycles of marginalization and exclusion within the cultural sector.

4. **Intellectual Property Issues:** Protecting the intellectual property rights of artists and ensuring they receive fair compensation for their creative work remain pressing concerns within the Americas. The proliferation of digital technologies and online platforms has facilitated greater access to artistic content but has also led to widespread copyright infringement and piracy. Many artists, particularly those from economically vulnerable communities, face challenges in enforcing their intellectual property rights and securing royalties for their work. In the absence of robust legal frameworks and

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effective enforcement mechanisms, artists are often left vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, undermining their ability to sustain themselves financially and invest in their artistic practice. Addressing these intellectual property issues is essential for creating a supportive and equitable environment for artistic collaboration and cultural exchange within the region.

Topics to Consider

- Should the OAS take a role in encouraging music and art within the Americas?
- How should the OAS take on such a role?
- What types of music and art should be encouraged over others?
- How can the OAS support funding for local artists?
- What platforms can be created or enhanced to give artists more exposure?
- How can cultural exchange programs be structured to ensure inclusivity and diversity?
- What measures can be taken to protect the intellectual property rights of artists?
- How can member states collaborate to create a regional competition similar to Eurovision?
- In what ways can public and private sectors partner to support the arts?
- How can the promotion of cultural events help in strengthening regional unity and identity?

By addressing these questions, the OAS can develop comprehensive strategies to support local artists, encourage collaboration across the Americas, and promote a rich and diverse cultural landscape that unites the region through music and art.

Topic 2: Telenovelas and TV

Telenovelas, a cornerstone of Latin American television programming, have not only captivated audiences with their melodramatic plots and charismatic characters but also served as powerful agents of cultural influence and social commentary throughout the Americas. Originating in Mexico in the 1950s, these serialized dramas quickly gained popularity and spread across the region, shaping popular discourse, influencing social norms, and reflecting the values and aspirations of diverse communities. These serialized dramas have become an integral part of the cultural landscape, shaping popular discourse, influencing social norms, and reflecting the values and aspirations of diverse communities. As the Organization of American States (OAS) convenes to discuss the importance of telenovelas in the Americas, delegates will explore the multifaceted role of these television dramas in promoting cultural appreciation, fostering social cohesion, and addressing pressing societal issues.

Past Significance of Telenovelas and TV Cultural Influence

Specific examples of influential telenovelas include "Cuna de Lobos" (1986) from Mexico, which is renowned for its intricate plot twists and memorable characters, and "Yo Soy Betty, La Fea" (1999) from Colombia, which gained international acclaim for its unconventional storyline and emphasis on inner beauty. These telenovelas not only entertained audiences but also sparked conversations about gender roles, class dynamics, and societal expectations, contributing to a broader cultural dialogue within the region.

In addition to "Cuna de Lobos" and "Yo Soy Betty, La Fea," numerous other telenovelas have left an indelible mark on Latin American television and cultural

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discourse, further exemplifying the genre's significance and influence. One such example is "Rebelde" (2004) from Mexico, a teen telenovela that achieved unprecedented success both domestically and internationally. The series, which follows the lives of students at a prestigious boarding school, addressed issues such as friendship, love, and identity, resonating with young audiences across the Americas. "Rebelde" not only catapulted its cast to superstardom but also spawned a multimedia franchise, including music albums, concerts, and merchandise, underscoring its cultural impact and commercial success.

Another notable example is "Avenida Brasil" (2012) from Brazil, which captivated audiences with its gripping storyline and complex characters. Set in a Rio de Janeiro favela, the telenovela explored themes of revenge, redemption, and social inequality, shedding light on the realities of urban life in Brazil. "Avenida Brasil" garnered critical acclaim for its realistic portrayal of Brazilian society and its nuanced depiction of class divisions, earning praise from viewers and critics alike. The telenovela's finale became one of the most-watched television episodes in Brazilian history, further cementing its status as a cultural phenomenon.

Beyond individual telenovelas, television networks have also played a pivotal role in shaping cultural identity and fostering regional unity through their programming. For example, Televisa in Mexico and Globo in Brazil have emerged as dominant forces in Latin American television, producing and exporting telenovelas that resonate with audiences across the continent. These networks have leveraged their influence to promote cultural exchange and collaboration among diverse communities, showcasing the talent and creativity of Latin American filmmakers, actors, and writers on a global stage.

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The cultural significance of telenovelas extends beyond entertainment, serving as a reflection of societal values, aspirations, and struggles. Through their compelling storylines and relatable characters, telenovelas have provided a platform for marginalized voices to be heard and represented, challenging stereotypes and promoting social inclusion. Moreover, the international success of telenovelas has helped to elevate Latin American culture and identity on the global stage, fostering a sense of pride and solidarity among diaspora communities worldwide. As such, telenovelas continue to play a central role in shaping cultural identity and fostering cross-cultural dialogue within the Americas and beyond. The substantial global popularity and cultural influence of Latin American telenovelas have made them a powerful tool for promoting regional unity and identity across the Americas. The telenovela phenomenon has also spurred cross-cultural collaborations, with various countries co-producing and sharing these serialized dramas, further strengthening regional ties and cultural appreciation.

Issues

Despite their popularity and cultural significance, telenovelas and television programming in the Americas face several challenges that hinder their full potential as agents of cultural appreciation and social change:

1. **Commercialization and Sensationalism:** The commercialization of telenovelas has led to an oversaturation of formulaic content that prioritizes sensationalism over substantive storytelling. Television networks, driven by the pursuit of ratings and advertising revenue, often resort to clichéd plots and stereotypes to attract viewers, resulting in a decline in the quality and originality of telenovelas. This reliance on

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sensationalist content perpetuates harmful narratives and reinforces negative stereotypes, detracting from the educational and artistic potential of telenovelas as a medium for cultural expression. By prioritizing profit over artistic integrity, networks risk diluting the cultural richness and authenticity that define the genre, compromising its ability to reflect and resonate with diverse audiences.

2. **Lack of Diversity and Representation:** Despite their widespread appeal, telenovelas have been criticized for their lack of diversity and representation, particularly in terms of race, ethnicity, and socio-economic background. The overrepresentation of white, affluent characters in leading roles perpetuates dominant ideals of beauty and success, marginalizing minority voices and limiting opportunities for inclusive storytelling. This lack of diversity not only fails to reflect the demographic realities of Latin American societies but also reinforces existing power dynamics and hierarchies of privilege. By perpetuating narrow and exclusionary representations of identity, telenovelas risk alienating large segments of their audience and perpetuating social inequalities.

3. **Censorship and Content Restrictions:** In some countries, telenovelas and television programming are subject to censorship and content restrictions imposed by government regulatory bodies or conservative interest groups. This censorship can stifle creativity and innovation, limiting the ability of creators to address pressing social issues or explore controversial topics in their work. Moreover, content restrictions may result in self-censorship among writers and producers, leading to the avoidance of sensitive or contentious subject matter in favor of safer, less provocative storytelling. This not only undermines the artistic integrity of telenovelas but also deprives audiences of opportunities for critical reflection and engagement with complex social issues.

4. Impact on Cultural Identity: The globalization of television programming has led to concerns about the homogenization of cultural identity within the Americas. As telenovelas and imported TV shows from dominant media markets like the United States gain prominence, there is a risk of eroding local cultural traditions and values, undermining the unique cultural heritage of individual countries and communities. This cultural homogenization not only diminishes the diversity and richness of Latin American cultures but also perpetuates a Western-centric worldview that marginalizes indigenous, Afro-Latinx, and other minority communities. By prioritizing marketability and mass appeal over cultural authenticity, telenovelas risk contributing to the erosion of cultural diversity and the commodification of identity within the region.

Topics to Consider

- How can the OAS facilitate collaboration and knowledge-sharing among member nations to promote the production and distribution of culturally diverse telenovelas?
- Can telenovelas be a force for good in society, promoting education, social awareness, and positive values? If so, how can the OAS support initiatives that harness the educational potential of television programming?
- Should the topics discussed in telenovelas be limited to those that benefit society, or should creators have creative freedom to explore controversial or taboo subjects?
- What types of telenovelas, in terms of casting diversity and filming locations, should be encouraged by the OAS to promote inclusivity and representation within the industry?

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- How can the OAS support initiatives to address commercialization and sensationalism in television programming, encouraging networks to prioritize quality storytelling and cultural authenticity over ratings-driven content?

By addressing these questions, the OAS can play a vital role in fostering a more inclusive, equitable, and culturally vibrant television industry. Through collaborative initiatives, policy advocacy, and resource allocation, the OAS can empower creators, producers, and audiences to harness the transformative potential of telenovelas as a force for positive social change and cultural enrichment across the Americas.

Country List:

1. Argentina

Argentina boasts a rich cultural heritage, exemplified by its tango music and vibrant art scene, which are crucial to its national identity. The country also produces influential telenovelas that reflect social issues and are widely popular across Latin America.

2. Barbados

Barbados is renowned for its contributions to Caribbean music, particularly calypso and soca, which play a central role in its cultural festivities. While not a major producer of telenovelas, Barbados' television industry is growing, offering unique Caribbean perspectives.

3. Belize

Belize has a diverse cultural landscape influenced by its Afro-Caribbean, Maya, and Mestizo communities, evident in its music and art. The country is developing its television sector, with potential for locally-produced shows to highlight its cultural diversity.

4. Bolivia

Bolivia's rich indigenous heritage is reflected in its traditional music and vibrant arts scene, which are integral to its cultural identity. The Bolivian telenovela industry is nascent but growing, focusing on local stories and social issues.

5. Brazil

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Brazil is famous for its samba and bossa nova music, as well as its world-renowned Carnival, showcasing the country's Afro-Brazilian cultural roots. Brazilian telenovelas are among the most popular and influential in Latin America, often addressing socio-economic issues and class dynamics.

6. Canada

Canada supports a diverse arts scene, with substantial contributions from its Indigenous, Francophone, and multicultural communities. The country's television industry includes popular dramas that reflect its cultural diversity, though it is less known for telenovelas.

7. Chile

Chile's vibrant music and art scenes are integral to its cultural identity, with influences ranging from indigenous Mapuche traditions to modern urban expressions. Chilean telenovelas often tackle social issues, providing critical reflections on contemporary Chilean society.

8. Colombia

Colombia's music scene, especially cumbia and vallenato, is internationally recognized, and the country has a flourishing arts culture. Colombian telenovelas like "Yo Soy Betty, La Fea" have achieved international success, blending entertainment with social commentary.

9. Costa Rica

Costa Rica's cultural offerings include rich folkloric music and a growing contemporary arts scene. While its telenovela industry is smaller, Costa Rican shows often highlight environmental themes and social justice issues.

10. Cuba

Cuba's music, particularly son and salsa, has had a profound global influence, and its arts scene is vibrant and politically charged. Cuban television, including telenovelas, frequently explores themes of revolution, identity, and social change.

11. Dominican Republic

The Dominican Republic is known for its merengue and bachata music, which are central to its cultural identity. The country's telenovelas often reflect its social and economic realities, with a growing industry that resonates with local and regional audiences.

12. Ecuador

Ecuador boasts a rich musical heritage with indigenous and mestizo influences, and its art scene is thriving with contemporary and traditional expressions. Ecuadorian telenovelas focus on domestic issues and cultural narratives, contributing to the national discourse.

13. El Salvador

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El Salvador's music and arts reflect its complex history and vibrant cultural mix, with significant indigenous and Spanish influences. The country's emerging telenovela industry addresses local social issues and seeks to connect with broader audiences.

14. Grenada

Grenada is known for its calypso and reggae music, which are integral to its cultural celebrations. The nation is developing its television industry, with potential for unique Caribbean storytelling through telenovelas.

15. Guatemala

Guatemala's rich Mayan heritage is evident in its traditional music and vibrant arts scene. The country's television industry is growing, with telenovelas that often highlight indigenous cultures and social issues.

16. Guyana

Guyana's cultural scene includes a mix of Caribbean, South American, and indigenous influences, reflected in its music and arts. The television sector is developing, with opportunities to showcase its diverse cultural narratives through telenovelas.

17. Haiti

Haiti is renowned for its unique music, such as compas, and its rich visual arts tradition, deeply rooted in its African heritage. The Haitian television industry, including telenovelas, often explores themes of resilience and identity.

18. Honduras

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Honduras' music and arts reflect its indigenous, African, and Spanish influences, forming a vibrant cultural tapestry. The telenovela industry is emerging, with a focus on local stories and social issues.

19. Jamaica

Jamaica's global cultural impact is immense, particularly through its reggae music and dynamic arts scene. While not traditionally known for telenovelas, Jamaica's growing television industry offers unique perspectives on Caribbean life and culture.

20. Mexico

Mexico is a cultural powerhouse, known for its mariachi music, vibrant art scene, and the birthplace of telenovelas. Mexican telenovelas are influential throughout the Americas, often addressing themes of love, betrayal, and social justice.

21. Nicaragua

Nicaragua's cultural heritage includes traditional music like marimba and a flourishing arts community. The telenovela industry is developing, with potential to highlight Nicaragua's unique social and cultural issues.

22. Panama

Panama's music and arts are influenced by its diverse population, including indigenous, African, and Spanish roots. The telenovela industry is growing, with local productions that often reflect the country's multicultural identity.

23. Paraguay

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Paraguay's cultural identity is shaped by its Guarani heritage and traditional music like polka paraguaya. The country's telenovela industry is emerging, focusing on domestic narratives and social themes.

24. Peru

Peru is renowned for its rich musical traditions, such as Andean music, and a vibrant arts scene. Peruvian telenovelas often incorporate elements of indigenous culture and address social inequalities.

25. Saint Kitts and Nevis

Saint Kitts and Nevis is known for its vibrant music, including calypso and soca, and a growing arts community. The television industry is developing, with opportunities to showcase local stories through telenovelas.

26. Saint Lucia

Saint Lucia's cultural offerings include rich musical traditions and a burgeoning arts scene. The nation's television sector is growing, with potential for unique Caribbean storytelling through telenovelas.

27. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is known for its lively music scene, including soca and calypso, and a vibrant arts community. The television industry is emerging, offering opportunities to highlight local cultural narratives through telenovelas.

28. Suriname

Suriname's diverse cultural landscape includes music and arts influenced by its indigenous, African, and Asian heritage. The country's television sector is developing, with potential to explore its unique cultural stories through telenovelas.

29. Trinidad and Tobago

Trinidad and Tobago is renowned for its calypso and soca music, integral to its cultural identity and Carnival celebrations. While not traditionally known for telenovelas, the growing television industry offers rich storytelling potential reflective of its diverse society.

30. United States

The United States, while more known for its global media influence, has a diverse arts scene that includes significant contributions from Latin American communities. The U.S. produces telenovelas, particularly for Hispanic audiences, addressing themes relevant to both domestic and international viewers.

31. Uruguay

Uruguay's cultural heritage is reflected in its tango music and dynamic arts scene, with influences from its European and indigenous roots. The telenovela industry is emerging, with local productions that often explore social issues and cultural narratives.

32. Venezuela

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Venezuela is known for its rich musical traditions, including joropo, and a vibrant arts community. Venezuelan telenovelas are highly influential, often tackling social and political themes and enjoying widespread popularity across Latin America.

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