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Leandro Guerrero (with Conjunto Alamo)
21. **LAS CORONELAS** (polka)
Esteban "Steve" Jordan

Edited by Chris Strachwitz with
suggestions from Gilbert Reyes Jr. &
Doctor Loco

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ACCORDION CONJUNTO CHAMPS



of Tejano and Norteño Music



Accordion Conjunto Champs

In the 1950s when Rhythm & Blues and Rock & Roll were inundating the American music scene, the unique accordion music of south Texas and northern Mexico (known as *norteño* on the Mexican side and simply as *conjunto* on the US side) was little known and even less recognized outside its home turf. Since then, however, this danceable, joyful, lilting music from the vast and isolated border region has developed into perhaps the most widely known of all Mexican regional styles. Popular polkas, waltzes, redovas, schotises, mazurkas, huapangos, rancheras, danzónes, boleros, cumbias, and simply songs, are today performed largely by such groups which feature a vocal duet accompanied by accordion, bajo sexto (a bassy 12 string guitar), bass, and drums. They have replaced most earlier musical ensembles especially for rural or working class audiences..

On this CD you hear some of the most remarkable, influential and popular **Accordion Champs** of the past half century with a focus on the ones who helped create this genre during its formative period from the 1940s into the 70s. Unlike the world of sports or classical music where we have written documents going back in time, the champs of vernacular or regional music must be judged primarily by what they have left behind in the grooves of old phonograph records. These are the regional accordion champs who started the sound which today is brought to huge audiences throughout the Spanish speaking world by groups like Los Tigres Del Norte, Ramon Ayala, etc.

In the last 20 years several books have appeared dealing with this music and the musicians heard here. May I suggest: **"The Texas-Mexican Conjunto"** (History of a Working-Class Music) by Manuel Peña

(University of Texas Press) and **"Puro Conjunto"** edited by Juan Tejeda & Avelardo Valdez (a collection of articles by various writers) (CMAS Books). For more information about most of the artists also note their individual CDs on ARHOOLIE Records from which many of these tracks are taken. For short bios of many of the artists we also suggest The Billboard Guide To **"Tejano And Regional Mexican Music"** by Ramiro Burr (Billboard Books).

Essential viewing are the two films: **"Chulas Fronteras"** and **"Del Mero Corazón"** (Roots of Tex-Mex Music) by Les Blank and Chris Strachwitz. Both of these bi-lingual films are now available on one DVD (Brazos Films DVD # 104) with an additional 30 minutes of previously unissued bonus footage. Among the featured musicians are: Lydia Mendoza, Narciso Martínez, Flaco Jiménez, Los Alegres de Terán, Santiago Jiménez Sr., Ramiro Cavazos of Los Donneños, Little Joe & La Familia, Conjunto Tamaulipas, Los Hermanos



Cardenas, Chavela with Brown Express, Leo Garza y su conjunto, Los Pingüinos del Norte, and more.

The Accordion Champs

1. *Muchacha Bonita* (polka)

NARCISO MARTÍNEZ (Narciso Martínez, Berwick Music Corp.)
from Arhoolie CD 361: "Father of the Texas-Mexican Conjunto"



Narciso Martínez



PEDRO AYALA
y su Acordeón

2. *Patricia* (mazurka) **PEDRO AYALA**
(Pedro Ayala)
from Arhoolie CD 9022 "El Monarca Del Acordeon"

courtesy The Arhoolie Foundation

3. *La Coneja* (polka) **PAULINO BERNAL**
(Paulino Bernal – Tradition Music Co., BMI,
Admin. by BUG Music Co., Hollywood, CA)
from Arhoolie CD 9010 "Conjunto Bernal –
Early Tejano Classics"



Paulino Bernal

PAULINO BERNAL
ARTISTA EXCLUSIVO EN DISCOS NOPAL

courtesy The Arhoolie Foundation



Juan López

4. *Cuando Bebo* (vals ranchera)

PAULINO BERNAL (vocal by Carmen Y
Laura) (DAR)
from Arhoolie CD 9021 "Conjunto Bernal –
Mi Humilde Corazon"

5. *Noche Alegre* (polka) **JUAN LÓPEZ**

(Juan López – Tradition Music Co., BMI,
Admin. by BUG Music Co., Hollywood, CA)
from Arhoolie CD 407 "El Rey De La
Redova"

courtesy The Arhoolie Foundation



6. *Alejamiento Y Regreso* (ranchera)
SALVADOR TORRES-GARCÍA (with Los Pavos Reales) (José A. Morante, San Antonio Music Publ.)
 from Arhoolie CD 410 "Los Pavos Reales – Early Hits"

7. *Virgencita De Mi Vida* (cancion)
FRED ZIMMERLE (with Conjunto Trio San Antonio) (DAR)
 from Arhoolie LP 3004 "Trio San Antonio"



Trio San Antonio

© Chris Strachwitz

8. *Que Rebonito* (huapango) **NARCISO MARTÍNEZ** (Narciso Martínez)
 from Ideal # 788

9. *Una Noche En Un Jardin* (ranchera)
SANTIAGO JIMÉNEZ SR. (Santiago Jiménez)
 from Falcon # 959

La Prensa, San Antonio, Sept. 8 1950, courtesy The Arhoolie Foundation

trición" para conocer el progreso de alumnos desnutridos y prevenir la causa de esa desnutrición, de tal manera que se pueda evaluar una obra positiva en favor de la niñez escolar.

El Comisario de Policía Municipal advierte que en la parte norte y central de Florida habrá vientos y fuerte oleaje peligroso para las embarcaciones.

SANTIAGO JIMENEZ Y SUS VALEDORES

Se presentan los Viernes, Sábados y Domingos, desde las 3 de la tarde
 ACTUACION ESPECIAL DE LYDIA MENDOZA
GAUCHOS GARDENS 2102 EL PASO STREET

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\$5 al Contado



Flaco Jiménez

© Chris Strachwitz

10. *Juarez* (danzón) **FLACO JIMÉNEZ**
 (arr. by Leonardo Jiménez – Tradition Music Co., BMI, Admin. by BUG Music Co., Hollywood, CA)
 from Arhoolie CD 318 "Ay Te Dejo En San Antonio"

11. Flor De Dalia (mazurka)

SANTIAGO JIMÉNEZ JR. (arr. by Santiago Jiménez Jr. – Tradition Music Co., BMI, Admin. by BUG Music Co., Hollywood, CA) from Arhoolie CD 317 “El Mero, Mero de San Antonio”

12. Vida Fatal (ranchera)

PEDRO YBARRA (vocal by Raul Gutierrez) (Pedro Ybarra) from Rio # 445



13. Los Frijoles Bailan (polka) **TONY DE LA ROSA** (Tony De La Rosa) from Arhoolie CD 362 “Atotonilco”



14. Me Dejaste (ranchera) **EUGENIO ABREGO** with Tomas Ortiz (Los Alegres de Terán) (Tomas Ortiz) from Falcon # 370

15. Terán (polka)

EUGENIO ABREGO

(Los Alegres de Terán) (Eugenio Abrego)
from Falcon # 397

16. Al Cortar Una Gardenia

(ranchera) **FRED ZIMMERLE** (with
Conjunto Trio San Antonio) (Marco
Rivera, TNT Music)
from Arhoolie tape – previously unissued

17. Amor de Madre (schotis)

NARCISO MARTÍNEZ (DAR)

from Arhoolie CD 361 “Father of the Texas-
Mexican Conjunto”



The Institute of Texan Cultures, courtesy
Frank Corrales

18. El Canoero (cumbia)

VALERIO LONGORIA (Valerio Longoria –
Tradition Music Co., BMI, Admin. by BUG
Music Co., Hollywood, CA)
from Arhoolie CD 336 “Caballo Viejo”

19. El Sube Y Baja (polka)

MARIO MONTÉS (with Ramiro Cavazos
& Los Donneños) (Mario Montés)
from Falcon 78 # 294

20. La Ratita (guaracha)

LEANDRO GUERRERO (with Conjunto
Alamo) (Leo Uriegas)
from Arhoolie CD 376 “San Antonio’s
Conjuntos in the 1950s”

21. Las Coronelas (polka)

ESTEBAN “STEVE” JORDAN (Bonifacio

Collazo, Edward B. Marks Music Co.)
from Arhoolie CD 319 “The Many Sounds of
Steve Jordan”



© Chris Strachwitz

Editor’s closing comment:

All the Champs from Narciso Martínez to Flaco Jiménez and Steve Jordan should be well known to anyone acquainted with Tejano Conjunto and Norteño music. They all achieved wide spread popularity throughout the border region and beyond. The exceptions are several unsung heroes from San Antonio: Fred Zimmerle, Pedro Ybarra, and Leandro Guerrero. I have included Fred Zimmerle because he has always been one of my favorite accordionists and he sang with a passion and fierceness seldom heard north of the border. Pedro Ybarra was considered to be one of the main influences on Flaco Jiménez’s accordion style. Leandro Guerrero was one of the few fine accordionists who was also willing to try less traditional material.

Chris Strachwitz – 2004

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