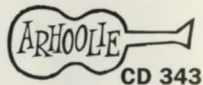


# Tejano Roots:

## THE WOMEN (1946 - 1970)



1. **Carmen y Laura:** QUE COBARDE (Nico Jimenéz) (Ranchera) (1343 A) (May 1956) with Paulino Bernal, accordion & Conjunto Bernal
2. **Carmen y Laura:** ANGEL MIO (Frank Cantu) (Canción) (11-B) (April 1946) with Narciso Martínez - accordion & Santiago Alameida - bajo sexto
3. **Carmen y Laura:** SE ME FUE MI AMOR (DAR) (Cancion) (4 ST) (Late 1945) with Isaac Figueroa-accordion, Juan García - bajo sexto, Jesus García -bass
4. **Las Abajeñas:** PERDON MUJER (Gilberto Parra) (Ranchera) (177-B) (May 1948) with Narciso Martínez - accordion
5. **Las Abajeñas:** YA NO QUIERO QUE ME QUIERAS (DAR) (Ranchera) (188-B) (1948) with Narciso Martínez - accordion
6. **Hermanas Fraga:** AMOR PENDIENTE (Luis M. Moreno) (Ranchera) (218-B) (1948) with Mariachi México del Norte
7. **Rosita Fernández:** MI FRACASO (Chabelita Noriega & Fidel Cuellar) (Bolero) (483-B) (July 1950) with Conjunto Ideal
8. **Hermanas Segovia:** TIENES OTROS AMORES (DAR) (Ranchera) (388-B) (Nov. 1949) with Conjunto Ideal
9. **Hermanas Segovia:** NO QUIERO ESPERAR (DAR) (Bolero) (504-A) (Sept. 1950) with Mariachi Ideal
10. **Delia y Laura:** CONTESTACION A MI CAFETAL (Porro - Canción) (697-A) (Jan. 1952) with Orquesta De Eugenio Gutierrez
11. **Rosita y Laura:** LA TRAIORA (José Alfredo Jimenez) (Ranchera) (708-A) (Jan. 1952) with Beto Villa's Orchestra
12. **Rosita y Laura:** ESPERANDO (Rafael de Paz) (Bolero) (704-A) (Jan. 1952) with Beto Villa's Orchestra

(Continued inside on Page 2)

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# TEJANO ROOTS

OVER 60 MINUTES OF CLASSIC TEJANO MUSIC

## The Women



Carmen y Laura  
Juanita y Maria  
Mendoza  
Las Abajeñas  
Rosita Fernandez  
Hnas. Segovia  
Hnas. Cantu  
Hnas. Guerrero  
Lydia Mendoza  
Chelo Silva

IDEAL



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13. **Hermanas Cantú** (Ninfa & Nori): LA QUE SEA (DAR) (Ranchera) (1169-B) (Feb. 55) with Conjunto Bernal
14. **Hermanas Guerrero** (Maria Luisa & Felipa): RAMA SECA (R. Ortega-Pepe Albarrán) (Ranchera) (1802-B) (July 1960) with Conjunto Jimmy Morgan
15. **Hermanas Guerrero**: LA CASADA (E. Raud-R. Ortega) (Ranchera) (1802-A) (July 1960) with Conjunto Jimmy Morgan
16. **María Luisa Guerrero**: CARTA DE LUTO (Raúl P. Cordova) (Ranchera) (1461-A) (March 1957) with Conjunto de Morgan y Castillo
17. **Chelo Silva**: SI ACASO VUELVES (Emilio Barney) (Bolero) (LP 149) (March 1957)
18. **Las Rancheritas**: ADIOS ANGELITA RIVAS (R. Elizondo) (Ranchera) (1485-B) (1957) with Conjunto Los Hermanos Banda
19. **Las Rancheritas**: LE FALTA UN CLAVO A MICRUZ (J. Luis Balderabano) (Ranchera) (1485-A) (1957) with Conjunto Los Hermanos Banda
20. **Lydia Mendoza**: AUNQUE ME ODIAS (José Morante) (Bolero) (1103-B) (June 1954) with Tony De La Rosa - accordion
21. **Hermanas Mendoza** (Juanita & Maria): PUENTES QUEMADOS (José Morante) (Ranchera) (1161-A) (Jan 1955) with Tony De La Rosa y su Conjunto
22. **Lydia Mendoza**: AMOR BONITO (Lydia Mendoza) (Ranchera) (2179-B) (June 1964) with Gilberto Lopez - accordion y su conjunto

Number in parenthesis is the original Ideal catalog release number. Recording dates are approximate. Original recordings produced by Armando Marroquin in Alice, Texas (1946 - 1958) or Paco Bettancourt in San Benito, Texas (1958 - 1970). The masters of the Ideal catalog were purchased in 1990 by Arhoolie Productions and are re-produced from the best sources available: tape, acetate or 78 rpm pressing. All biographies written by Jim Nicholopoulos and Chris Strachwitz in 1991 with additional information from the Texas Music Museum, Austin, TX. Edited by Chris Strachwitz. Cover by Elizabeth Weil and Wayne Pope. Transcriptions by Jim Nicolopoulos and Zack Salem. Text editing by Dix Bruce. Translations by Zack Salem and Juanita Salem.

**Cover photo: Carmen and Laura**

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## Tejano Roots/Raices Tejanas The Women (1946-1970)

Before the decade of the 1930s, women's involvement in the Mexican entertainment world centered on the vaudeville theater stage, where many achieved renown as singers, comediennes, *vedettes* (dancers) and *segundas tiples* (chorus girls). As far as recordings go, it wasn't until the late 1920s that the first female vocal duets and trios came into vogue, breaking away from this *zarzuela*-oriented solo and choral singing that had characterized Mexican musical theater since the turn of the century. Just how long Mexican female (and male, for that matter) duets have been popular on this side of the border is unclear. Charles Loomis of the Southwest Museum made over forty non-commercial cylinder recordings of the Villa sisters, Rosa and Luisa, accompanying themselves on guitar and mandolin in Los Angeles as early as 1904. By the mid-1920s the Herrera sisters recorded for the Sunset label in Los Angeles, and by the early 1930s the Posada sisters, Lupe and Virginia, had achieved local stardom in the Los Angeles area and the Aguilar sisters from Mexico were making highly touted appearances. A few years later **Lydia Mendoza** and her mother Leonor made many recordings in the dueto style for Blue Bird. However, the first female dueto this side of the border to make it really big both nationally and internationally billed as a sister duet were the **Hermanas Padilla** from Los Angeles. Sisters Margarita and María Padilla, who sang almost exclusively *ranchera*-type songs, pioneered a vocal style that widely influenced *ranchera* singing and created a demand for other female vocal duets.

By the 1940s, however, Mexican music in Texas had developed a sound and a market of its own, independent from the mainstream Mexican popular music industry. The Mexican population of Los Angeles came mainly from the central western states of Jalisco and Michoacán: birthplace of the *mariachi*. Direct contact was well established between the burgeoning entertainment business centers of Hollywood and Mexico City, intensively fostered in the ambiance of the race track and Prohibition era nightclubs and casinos of Tijuana. On the other hand, in the region between, roughly, San Antonio, Texas and Monterrey, Nuevo León, a distinct musical culture had evolved that was not represented by the "Tin Pan Alley" productions of Los Angeles or Mexico City. By the late 1940s this unique regional sound was best typified by the combination of



dueto singing accompanied by the accordion / *bajo sexto conjunto*, which came to be known as *música norteña*, something that was not to be found at the time in either Southern California or Central Mexico.

Major recording companies in Mexico, especially Columbia, showed some awareness of the market for this new sound from the North by recording groups like Los Alegres de Terán and Los Montañeses del Alamo in Monterrey in the early 1950s. On the U.S. side of the border, however, it was up to local entrepreneurs to cater to the musical appetites of the regional market. Major U.S. labels had stopped producing regional musics with the advent of World War II. While some early Los Angeles based independent labels like Azteca did seek out performers from San Antonio such as **Lydia** and the **Mendoza Sisters**, the brunt of purveying the new *música norteña* fell upon the Mexican-American businessmen of South Texas. Foremost among these was **Armando Marroquín** whose recording efforts for Paco Bettancourt's **Discos Ideal** made it not only the very first and most prolific of the Texas labels, but also for many years the most representative of the artists and musical culture of the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Whereas homegrown Rio Records of San Antonio and some of the Los Angeles independents recorded many of the more established performers from San Antonio, it was Marroquín who recorded hundreds and hundreds of sides by artists from Alice, Falfurrias, San Benito, Brownsville and other communities of the Lower Border region.

Because Marroquín's first recording act was the dueto of his wife and sister-in-law, Ideal Records was intimately associated with the development of women's duets from the very beginning. He was also aware of the fact that the growing Tejano middle class was not especially fond of the accordion conjuntos which were associated with the lower classes. As a result of this realization he recorded his wife and her sister, and other singers too, backed not only by conjuntos but by Beto Villa and other orchestras.

The relative success of some of the women singers in what was then essentially an all-male recording industry had its difficulties, given the traditional role that women were expected to play in conservative, patriarchal Hispanic society in the Southwest. Women were featured mainly as vocalists and as such were exploited, at least to a certain extent, for their sex appeal as much as their singing talent. It was *de rigor* for a woman to retire from the stage if she married and devote her full attention to raising a family (Lydia Mendoza, Carmen y Laura, Eva Garza and Chelo Silva are all notable exceptions

that in one way or another prove the rule). Given the censorious moral tone of the society, one can only surmise that many gifted women never sang outside of their own homes. Few women wrote songs for commercial presentation, and almost the whole repertory of *ranchera* and *norteño* music came largely from a man's point of view. This did not limit the depth of heart-felt emotions that these women expressed in their singing, and it is to their credit that they could turn many of these songs around. Curiously enough, it seems that the male patrons of the *cantinas* particularly enjoyed hearing songs expressing a wronged man's diatribe against female perfidy being sung by the sweet voices of women singers. Indeed, because Marroquín was primarily interested in providing product for juke boxes, the songs heard on these recordings tend to reflect the tastes of *cantina* customers and include few songs primarily more appropriate for family participation. Nevertheless, the beauty and soulfulness of these classic recordings and the popularity these women enjoyed among the people of the Southwest all attest to their genuine contribution to the development of Tejano music. We owe them tribute for enriching the music of the world with their voices.

(Zack Salem, Jim Nicolopolulos and Chris Strachwitz, 1991)

## CARMEN Y LAURA

Carmen and Laura Hernandez were born five years apart (1921 and 1926) in Kingsville, Texas. Carmen, the eldest, says that her entire family used to sing, but apart from her brother Lupe Hernandez, who played jazz, none of them dreamed of performing professionally until WWII. Carmen met her husband, Armando Marroquín, while he was in college in Kingsville, and the newlyweds settled down and went into the juke box business in nearby Alice. Due to the wartime hiatus in record production in the U.S., they were obliged to buy records for their machines in Mexico. There was a great deal of red tape involved, and frustration with this gave Mr. Marroquín the idea of producing his own records. By the war's end it had become apparent that the major record labels were not interested in resuming production of regional material. Armando Marroquín, determined to supply his juke boxes, then obtained recording equipment, including a disc cutter, and contracted with a company in California to press and distribute his recordings. He would take his portion of the profits in discs, which he would use on his own juke boxes or sell directly to other regional juke box operators. The recording itself took place in



Carmen and Laura  
with Narciso Martinez and Santiago Almeida

Carmen's kitchen, and since her sister had just returned from school in Mexico, Marroquín's first star group was the *dueto* of his wife and her sister: **Carmen and Laura**. According to Carmen, their first hit was "*Se Me Fue Mi Amor*," a song which laments the absence of a woman's beloved overseas in the Service. This song not only reflects the wartime atmosphere that still prevailed, but is also unusual in presenting situations from the woman's point of view. A few months later, when Mr. Marroquín joined up with South Texas businessman Paco Betancourt to form Ideal Records, Carmen recalls with relief that they were at last able to move the recording studio out of her kitchen: "I got everybody out of my house. No more recording in the kitchen, it was a mess." Carmen and Laura continued to be among the most popular artists on the new label. They toured extensively in the years that followed, performing in Kansas City and Chicago as well as throughout the Southwest and California. The sisters recall that they were always accompanied by their husbands on the road and toured with dance bands such as those of popular Ideal recording artists Beto Villa or Pedro Bugarin from Arizona. Carmen and Laura never toured as part of *caravanas* like so many recording artists from Mexico would do; they would sing for dances in front of the orchestra, often performing for four hours a night. Other recordings by Carmen y Laura can be heard on Arhoolie CD 341 **Tejano Roots** and other releases in this Ideal series. Carmen and Laura made hundreds of records for Ideal with all types of supporting musicians ranging from the accordion conjuntos of neighbor Isaac Figueroa, Narciso Martinez, and Paulino Bernal to Beto Villa and his Tejano orchestra. (Jim Nicolopolulos, based on interview with Carmen and Laura by John Clark, Alice, TX, 2/17/91.)

### 1. QUE COBARDE

Qué cobarde,  
me enseñaste a querer,  
y luego, y luego me dejaste.  
Pero, qué cobarde,  
cuando más enamorada  
me encontraba sin piedad me abandonaste.

Qué cobarde,  
marchitaste la ilusión  
de todos mis quereres.

### WHAT A COWARD

What a coward,  
you taught me how to love,  
and then, and then you left me.  
What a coward!  
When I was most in love  
you abandoned me without pity.

What a coward,  
you withered the illusion  
of all my love.



Ya que no hay amor, verdad,  
yo maldigo con razón  
el ingrato corazón  
de los infieles.

## 2. ANGEL MIO

Ayer tarde pasé por tu casa  
y salió tu mamá y me vido  
y te dice: —¿Quién es este individuo  
que hace días lo miro pasar?

Y si paso es que quiero verte  
a mi lado tan sólo un momento  
pa' decirte todo lo que siento,  
ángel mío, yo muero por ti.

Ya no quiero que sufras, bien mío,  
ni que sufras ni me hagas sufrir,  
con las donas que borran al tiempo  
ante Dios nos habíamos de unir.

Ahí se acaba todo el sufrimiento,  
unidos para siempre los dos,  
si tus padres igual que los míos,  
nos bendicen por siempre ante Dios.

## 3. SE ME FUE MI AMOR

Se me fue mi amor  
y no sé ni adónde.  
Se me fue a la guerra  
sin decirme: "Vuelvo."

Se me fue mi amor,  
se me fue mi encanto,  
y no sé hasta cuándo  
volveré yo a verlo.

Now there is no love, no truth,  
so I damn, with good reason,  
the ungrateful heart  
of the unfaithful.

## MY ANGEL

Yesterday I went by your house  
and your mother came out and saw me  
and said: "Who is this individual I've  
been seeing around here for days?"

If I pass by your house it's  
because I want to see you at my side,  
if even for a moment, to tell you all I feel  
my angel, that I am dying for you.

I don't want you to suffer, my love,  
nor that you make me suffer  
with the wedding gifts that erase time  
before God it is inevitable we be united.

Here all our suffering ends,  
we two are always united,  
if your parents as well as mine  
give us their eternal blessing before God.

## MY LOVE HAS GONE

My love has gone,  
and I don't even know where.  
He left to go to war  
without telling me "I'll return."

My love has gone  
and with him my illusion,  
and I don't know when  
I'll ever see him again.

Quisiera su sombra ser,  
su suerte correrla yo,  
seguir su camino y el mismo destino  
que tenga que tenerlo yo.

Quisiera por él volar,  
hacia adonde está mi bien,  
volar por las aves, cruzar esos mares,  
llegar a morir con él.

Se me fue mi amor,  
pero no es por siempre,  
porque sé que vuelve  
otra vez a mí.

Yo le pido a Dios,  
si no vuelvo a verlo,  
que me dé la muerte,  
que es mejor morir.

## LAS ABAJENAS (Catalina and Victoria)

These two women, probably from Northern Mexico, made only a few recordings with Narciso Martinez, who was Ideal Records' "house musician." Martinez backed up many singers and was also a very popular and successful accordionist on his own.

## 4. PERDON MUJER

Qué bonito que quisieras volver,  
tu cariño me hace falta mujer,  
ya no puedo vivir lejos de ti,  
ni pensar que tus caricias perdí.

Una rosa que al nacer yo corté  
del jardín que llevo en el corazón,  
poco a poco tu cariño olvidé,  
marchitando a tu pasión.

Perdón, mujer,

I wish I were his shadow,  
and have his fortune be mine,  
to follow his path  
and to share the same destiny.

I wish I could fly for him,  
to where ever he may be,  
fly like the birds across the sea,  
to die along with him.

My love has gone,  
but not for ever,  
for I know that one day  
he shall return to me.

If I don't see him again,  
I ask God  
to grant me death,  
for death would be a better fate.

## FORGIVE ME, WOMAN

How beautiful that you would return,  
I've missed your loving, woman  
I can't live far from you now,  
nor recall I had lost your affection.

A rose from the garden of my heart  
I cut when it began to bloom.  
Little by little I forgot your love  
which withered away your passion.

Forgive me, woman,

no me niegues tu sonrisa, amor,  
quiero volver  
a tus brazos y olvidar el dolor.

Como yo, no hay quien te pueda querer,  
eres buena y volverás junto a mí,  
mi jardín ya volverá a florecer,  
y ahora todo es para ti.

## 5. YA NO QUIERO QUE ME QUIERAS

Ya no quiero que me quieras,  
no seas necia,  
ni dirijas tus miradas hacia mí.  
Sólo quiero para ti el mayor desprecio,  
vive feliz como yo vivo sin ti.

Hazte cuenta que sembramos una milpa,  
y esa milpa con la helada se secó,  
hazte cuenta que los dos fuimos basura,  
hazte cuenta que lo que pasó voló.

Ya no quiero que te metas más conmigo,  
ni me dejes en la vida vacilar.  
En el tiempo que te quise me engañaste,  
ahora, ni modo, yo ya me voy a pasar.

Ya te dije que no me andes con tus cosas,  
es inútil que me vengas a rogar,  
aunque llores y me digas que me quieres,  
no tengo tiempo, yo ya me voy a pasear.

## LAS HERMANAS FRAGA

Las Hermanas Fraga also recorded for the Los Angeles-based labels and this session may in fact have been recorded in California.

don't deny me your smile, my love.  
I want to return to your arms  
and to forget my pain.

There is no other who would love you  
like I, you are good and will return to me,  
my garden will again bloom,  
and this time it will be for you.

## I DON'T WANT YOU TO LOVE ME ANYMORE

I don't want you to love me anymore,  
don't be such a pain,  
I don't want you looking at me again.  
All I want is for you to snub me,  
and for you to be as happy as I am without you.

Just pretend we planted some corn  
and it withered away with the frost,  
Just pretend we were both trash,  
and that what's done is done.

I don't want you getting involved with me  
leave me alone to enjoy myself.  
Back when I loved you, you were unfaithful,  
and now, what can I do but be on my way.

Now I warned you not to bother me,  
it's useless for you to beg me,  
even if you cry and say you love me,  
I've no time, for I'm on my way.

## 6. AMOR PENDIENTE

Ya llegué, ya estoy aquí,  
ya volvió el que andaba ausente,  
ya no llores, chaparrita,  
en mi corazón resientes.

Con la carta que mandaste,  
no dormí de sentimiento,  
las palabras que me dices,  
las traigo en el pensamiento.

Las noches las hago días,  
para mí resiste el sueño,  
si hay algún interesado,  
diles que soy tu dueño.

Mi madre me dio un consejo,  
que no me ande desvelando,  
mi madre me dio la vida,  
y tú me lo estás quitando.

Ya con ésta me despido,  
salgo pa' tierra caliente,  
aquí se acaban cantando  
versos del amor pendiente.

## ROSITA FERNANDEZ

Rosita Fernández was born in Monterrey, Nuevo León, while her father, a captain in the Mexican Army, was riding in pursuit of Pancho Villa in 1916. While still a child, the Fernández family moved to San Antonio, where Rosita's maternal uncles earned their living as the Trío San Miguel. Young Rosita was recruited to sing with her uncles, and in 1932 won a radio singing contest which launched a long career in radio, and from 1949, in television too. Rosita made four motion pictures and many sound recordings, but she was perhaps best known in San Antonio for the 26 seasons she spent as star performer of the summer-long Fiesta Noche del Río in that city.

## LOVE LEFT WAITING

I've arrived, I am here now,  
he who was gone has now returned,  
don't cry my little girl,  
you are still in my heart.

With the letter you sent me  
I couldn't sleep from thinking,  
the words you wrote me,  
are stuck in my mind.

My nights are like days,  
because sleep evades me,  
if anyone else wants you,  
tell them you are mine.

My mother gave me some advice,  
she told me not to stay up at night,  
my mother gave me my life,  
and you are taking it away.

And with that I say farewell,  
I'm leaving for the warm country,  
here end the verses  
of the love left waiting.



## 7. MI FRACASO

Cuando nada pedí al amor,  
llegaste tú,  
y el miedo de volver a sufrir  
no me hacía querer.  
Pudo más el dulzor de tu voz,  
me venció el calor de tu ser.

Tú, también, me lograste engañar,  
lastimar y sangrar mi herido corazón,  
y aunque sé que hoy vuelvo a padecer,  
no te culpo si ya sé que mi fracaso  
es siempre querer.

## LAS HERMANAS SEGOVIA

Armando Marroquin was a very perceptive record producer who tried to reach the largest audience possible, especially with many of the women singers, by putting together back-up bands which combined the sound of the accordion *conjuntos* with orchestras and even *mariachis*. Each of these sounds appealed to a different strata of Tejano society. Conjunto Ideal, in this case including the remarkably tight interplay between trumpet, (probably Pepe Compian), and clarinet, (probably Tito Arredondo), created a sound which crossed over and attracted a wide range of listeners.

## 8. TIENES OTROS AMORES

Tú tienes otros amores,  
ahoy te vengo a avisar,  
que cuentas ya conmigo,  
ya te voy a abandonar.

Pues sigue con tus amores,  
ya al cabo ya no te quiero,  
porque al cabo es por demás,  
tu amor ya no es verdadero.

## MY RUIN

When I had nothing to ask of love,  
you arrived,  
and the fear of suffering again,  
made me hesitant.  
But the sweetness of your voice  
and the warmth of your soul changed my mind.

But you too were unfaithful,  
and made my wounded heart bleed,  
and although I know I will once again  
waste away, I don't blame you, I now  
know that to love will always be my ruin.

## YOU HAVE OTHER LOVES

You have other loves  
and I've come to let you know,  
not to count on me anymore,  
because I'm going to leave you.

Keep seeing your other loves,  
because I don't love you anyway,  
because it would be a waste of time,  
your love is not the genuine kind.

Las Hermanas Segovia,  
Aurelia and Lucita



Las Hermanas Guerrero,  
María Luisa and Felipa

Te quise con todo el alma,  
y era mi amor para ti,  
sin saber que me engañabas  
y te burlabas de mí.

Pero Dios que te bendiga,  
ya nuestro amor terminó,  
amores de varios dueños,  
esos no los quiero ya.

Pero al fin ya me despido,  
ya no me busques a mí,  
porque al cabo es en vano,  
ya no te quiero yo a ti.

### 9. NO QUIERO ESPERAR

¿Qué me gano con quererte  
si estás lejos de mi amor?  
He llorado por no verte,  
ya no siento tu calor.

Quiero ahogar estas tristezas  
con botellas de licor.  
Te quiero besar,  
te quiero tener en el pensamiento,  
no quiero esperar, tú debes volver  
por bien de los dos.

Vuelve, mujer, alivia ese dolor  
de mi alma herida.  
Vuelve, mujer, alivia ese dolor,  
bien de mi vida.

### DELIA y LAURA

Delia Gutiérrez and Laura Cantú (of Carmen y Laura). Delia Gutiérrez was born in Weslaco, TX, in 1931. She began singing with the *orquesta* of her father, Eugenio

I loved you with all my soul,  
and my love was all for you,  
without knowing you had betrayed me  
and had ridiculed my heart.

But may God bless you now,  
our love has come to an end,  
sharing a romance with other people  
is no kind of love for me.

That's all, at last I say goodby,  
don't come looking for me again,  
you would just be wasting your time  
because I no longer love you.

### I DON'T WANT TO WAIT

What's the point of loving you  
if you are far away from me?  
I've cried because I miss you,  
because I can't feel your warmth.

I want to drown these sorrows  
with plenty of booze.  
I want to have you on my mind  
and to kiss you, and I can't wait,  
you must return for the good  
of both of us.

Come back to me, woman,  
alleviate the pain of my wounded soul.  
Come back woman, stop the pain,  
you are the love of my life.

Gutiérrez, when she was eight years old. Delia grew up to be a popular singer and recorded for both Ideal and rival Falcón records. After her father's death she continued to sing with her husband's band, the Moy Pineda Orquesta.

### 10. CONTESTACION A MI CAFETAL ANSWER TO MY COFFEE PLANTATION

¿De qué presumes, vato Calavera?  
Contigo la güera/Ya no quiere na'.

Si tu guariche/Ya se te agüitó  
Y tu seguro/Se desabrochó.

Ya estuvo suave/Con los cafetales  
Ya son yerba jales/Que no vale na'.

Lo que tú tienes /Es un magueyal  
Eres bracero/Y siembra nixtamal.

### ROSITA Y LAURA

Rosita Fernandez (see #7) and Laura Cantu made some beautiful records together. Their voices blended superbly and the backing of Beto Villa's *orquesta* is just perfect.

### 11. LA TRAIIDORA

Ya supe todo y estoy  
Que ya no me aguanto.  
Oí a tu amante/Hablando de tu amor.  
Contó tu vida con/ Todo sus detalles  
Y yo escuchando/Muriendo de dolor.

No sé que dijo  
Sacando tu retrato,  
Habló de cosas/Que no quisiera creer.  
Y al fin de cuentas  
Se rió de tus encantos/Con una risa que

What are you so stuck up for,  
can't you see that this blonde wants  
nothing to do with a cheap guy like you?  
You've drunk all your beer and now  
your pants are falling down!

That was a good story about your  
coffee plantation, I'm sure it's nothing  
but a lot of weeds,  
what you've really got is a cactus farm,  
and you're nothing but a corn picking bracero!

### UNFAITHFUL WOMAN

Now I've found out everything,  
And I can't stand it anymore.  
I heard your lover/Talking about your love.  
He told of your life/In all of its details,  
While I listened/Dying from the pain.

I can't remember what he said  
As he took out your portrait,  
He spoke of things /I didn't want to believe.  
And after that he gloated over  
Your charms/With a smile that





Delia Gutierrez, (on left) with Eugenio Gutierrez y su Orquesta



Rosita Fernandez at WOAI, San Antonio, TX

Yo sentí muy cruel.

Aunque en la carcel/Me hundieran para siempre  
Podría matarlo y/llevarlo hasta tus pies.  
Pero él no tiene la culpa/De tu infamia,  
él fue buen hombre/Y tú, mala mujer.

Mañana mismo que voy./No sé pa' donde,  
Sé que me quedo/Y te tengo que matar.  
Mañana mismo te olvidas/De mi nombre,  
Que yo del tuyo/También me he de olvidar.

Felt so cruel to me.

Even though they would  
Throw me in jail for eternity,  
I would kill him and/Drag him to your feet.  
But it's not his fault,/It was your infamy,  
For he was a good man/And you, a bad woman.

I'm going tomorrow,  
Though I don't know where.  
I know if I stay/I'll end up killing you.  
Tomorrow you will forget my name  
And I as well/Shall have to forget yours.

## 12. ESPERANDO

Se han cansado mis brazos  
De estar esperando.  
Se han secado mis labios  
Por tu nombre gritar.  
He buscado por todos los caminos  
Del mundo  
Y están secos mis ojos  
De llorar y llorar.

Y te sigo esperando  
Con eterna esperanza.  
De que si acaso mis ruegos  
Llegue tu alma a escuchar.  
Mientras tanto mis brazos  
Y mis labios/Se cansan  
Y mis ojos se secan  
De llorar y llorar.

## WAITING

My arms have gotten tired  
Of waiting for you.  
And my mouth has dried out  
From shouting your name.  
I've searched for you to the ends  
Of the earth  
And my eyes have dried out  
From crying and crying.

And I still await you  
With the eternal hope,  
That someday my prayers  
Will reach your soul.  
Meanwhile my arms  
And my lips are tired  
And my eyes are dry  
From crying and crying.

## LAS HERMANAS CANTU

The Cantú sisters were born in Falfurrias, Texas. Nori (b.1935) and Ninfa (b.1937) began touring with the Beto Villa orchestra and recording for Ideal as the prize for winning a singing contest in Alice, Texas. They were joined by their younger sister Nellie (b.1943) in 1956. The Cantú sisters also recorded for many of the other regional labels that sprang up in imitation of Discos Ideal, and although Ninfa got married and retired in 1961, Nori and Nellie continued recording and performing until 1978. They are backed here by a very young Paulino Bernal on accordion, soon to be a star of *conjunto* music.

### 13. LA QUE SEA

Voy por el mundo sin rumbo fijo  
No siento pena ni siento amor.  
Soy el fantasma de mi pasado,  
Soy de las almas que olvida Dios.

Tuve un cariño que fue mi vida  
Fue mi locura, mi adoración.  
Pero más grande fue mi tormento  
Cuando cruelmente me abandonó.

Hoy la que venga, muy bien venida,  
Si quiere irse, nomás se va.  
Que allí vendrán otras, otras y otras  
Que hoy la que sea, para mí es igual.

Yo no soy de éstos que al verse solo  
Quieren matarse o vengar su amor.  
Por el contrario yo la bendigo  
Por el amor que una vez me dio.

Si un día con otro yo la encontrara  
Y me llorara pidiendo amor  
La perdonaba, que al fin sería  
Lo que en me vida las otras son.

### WHOEVER COMES ALONG

I wander the world without direction  
Without feeling shame and without feeling love.  
I'm only the ghost of my past,  
One of those souls that God has forgotten.

I had a love that was my life  
My passion and my madness.  
But even greater than this love,  
Was the torment I felt when she abandoned me.

Today, any woman who comes along is welcome,  
If she doesn't want to stay, she can go.  
For there will be more, many, many more,  
And to me they are all the same.

I'm not one of those people  
That when abandoned would kill himself or take  
revenge.

On the contrary, I would bless her  
For the love she once gave me.

If I found her one day with another  
And she cried, asking for my love,  
I would forgive her, because in the end  
She would be to me just like the rest.

## LAS HERMANAS GUERRERO

María Luisa, (who sings #16 solo), and Felipa Guerrero were from South Texas and are backed here by Jimmy Morgan's Conjunto. Morgan also made a number of fine records on his own about this time (1960).

### 14. RAMA SECA

Tú solita te fuiste alejando  
Cuando viste que supe lo que eres  
Y a toditos les fuistes contando  
Que me dejas porque no me quieres.

Eres guía que se enreda en las piedras  
Que se estira a ver cuántas alcanzas  
Pero a mí no pudiste enredarme  
Porque no te tuve confianza.

Rama seca que cuelga del árbol  
Nunca vuelve a tener hojas verdes  
Por capricho te vas de mi lado  
Pero vas a extrañar lo que pierdes.

Tú dirás que el amor es juguete  
Y que cae como la lluvia del cielo  
Tus amores que vuelen muy altos  
He de verlos rodar por el suelo.

Rama seca, etc.

### 15. LA CASADA

Yo soy la mujer casada  
Con las penas que he pasado  
Mi marido de bracerao  
No me manda ni un centavo.

Tengo tres años de estar sola  
Ay, nomás sufriendo errores:  
El gastando puro dólar  
Y yo sintiendo los dolores.

### DRY BRANCH

You distanced yourself from me  
When you found that I knew what you were  
And you went around telling everyone  
That you left me because you didn't love me.

You are like a vine that entwines the rocks  
You stretch and see how many you can reach  
But you couldn't rope me in  
Because I never trusted you.

Dry branch hanging from a tree  
That will never have green leaves again  
It is your whim to go and leave me  
But you will miss what you lose.

You would say that love is a toy  
And that it falls like rain from above  
Your love may fly very high  
But one day I'll see it fall to the ground.

Dry branch, etc.

### THE MARRIED WOMAN

I am the married woman  
With all the shame I suffer  
My husband has gone to work as a bracero  
And doesn't send me a penny.

I've been alone for three years  
Suffering from my mistakes:  
He's been spending nothing but dollars,  
And I've been feeling nothing but pain.



Las que no se hayan casado  
No deben darte a la pena  
Vale más un taco en casa  
Que cien platos en la ajena.

Cuando yo andaba de novia  
Me ofrecían leche y frijoles  
Ahora son gordas con chile  
Pa' tomar jarros de atole.

La mujer engaña al hombre  
Si la tiene muerta de hambre  
Pero si es el gusto de él  
Hasta la coyunda lambe.

Todos dicen ser muy gallos  
Todos dicen ser más machos  
Pero son desobligados  
Además de ser borrachos.

No quiero morirme de hambre  
Siendo la mujer más buena  
Vale más ser de las malas  
Pero con barriga llena.

## 16. CARTA DE LUTO

Allí te mando esta carta de luto  
Pa' decirte lo mucho que sufro  
Porque es tanto el amor que te tengo  
Que ya siento mi corazón muerto.

Esta carta con lápiz va escrita  
Y no creas que es por falta de pinta  
Sólo quiero que al verla comprendas  
Que se encuentra mi vida marchita.

Coro:

Esta carta de luto te escribo  
Porque triste y negro es mi destino

Those women who haven't married  
I say it isn't worth the bother  
Better to eat one taco in your home  
Then to have a hundred meals in another's.

When I was still his sweetheart  
He offered me milk and beans  
And now it's tortillas with chili peppers  
And jugs full of corn pudding.

A woman can betray a man  
If she is half starved  
But a man, if it pleases him,  
Chases after whoever he wants.

They all claim to be tough guys  
And they claim to be macho  
But they are all irresponsible  
Apart from being drunkards.

I don't want to be a good woman  
and starve to death  
I'd rather be one of those bad women  
And always have plenty to eat.

## LETTER OF MOURNING

I'm sending you this letter of mourning  
To tell you how much I suffer  
Because I love you so much  
That I feel my heart has died.

I'm writing this letter in pencil  
But don't think it's because I'm out of ink  
I just want to show you  
How much my life has faded away.

Chorus:

I'm writing you this letter of mourning  
Because my destiny is sad and dark,

Pero al fin deberé consolarme  
Porque Dios me marcó ese camino.

Al tomar esta carta en tus manos  
Sólo quiero que me hagas favor  
De estrecharla muy bien en tus brazos  
Para alivio de mi corazón.

Cuando escuches sonar las campanas  
Del reloj que está frente al panteón  
Sólo quiero que inclines tu frente  
Y que rezes por me una oración.

## CHELO SILVA

Chelo Silva (1922-1988) was born in Brownsville. She began her career there at the Continental Club and made her first recording for Discos Falcón in 1954, at that time the main competitor of Ideal. She went on to perform in Mexico, South America and throughout the U.S. and during the late 1950s was probably the bestselling female Hispanic recording artist on either side of the border. Chelo Silva was principally known as a singer of boleros, and is not to be confused with the Mexican singer Chelo who achieved great popularity as a ranchera singer in the 1970s. Along with Lydia Mendoza, Chelo Silva was known as one of the "Grandes de Texas," the two "Texas Greats."

## 17. SI ACASO VUELVES

El día que tú te canses ya  
De darme tu cariño  
No creas que yo te ruegue más  
Y sigue tu camino.

Tu vida no me importará  
Porque tú lo querrás así  
Diré, como dice el refrán:  
"Ni falta que hace, al fin el que se va."

No pienses que en mis noches  
De dolor  
Añore tus caricias

But I should at least console myself  
Knowing that God has shown me this route.

When you take this letter in hand  
Only do one favor for me,  
Hold it very tightly in your arms  
And alleviate my suffering heart.

When you hear the bells toll  
From the clock in front of the cemetery  
I only want you to bow your head  
And say a prayer for me.

## IN CASE YOU RETURN

The day you finally get tired  
Of giving me your love  
Don't ever think that I'll beg you  
And just go on your way.

I'll just say, like the old saying goes,  
"There's no need to worry,  
It's he who has decided to leave."

Don't think that during my nights  
Of pain  
I'll miss your caresses

Y tu amor  
Pues el vacío que dejas  
Sin razón  
Otro amor llenará  
Ay llenará

El día que tú te canses ya  
Hablando con sinceridad  
Diré, como dice el refrán:  
"Ni falta que hace, al fin  
El que se va."

## LAS RANCHERITAS

These two women from the lower Rio Grande Valley were accompanied by the Banda brothers, who in the 1960's became one of the most popular conjuntos along the border.

### 18. ADIOS ANGELITA RIVAS

Adiós Angelita Rivas de la Rivera  
Ya me voy muy lejos de aquí.  
Si puedo pasar el río, me voy a Texas  
Y de allá hasta Tennessee.

Ahora no soy bracero, voy de mojado,  
Lo que quiero es irme de aquí  
Que no digan mis amigos que fui a tu boda  
A que te burles de mí.

Yo sé que tiene arta lana tu ricachuelo,  
Yo sé que te compró el corazón.  
Mi vaca, mis seis chivitas y mi borrego  
No tienen ningún valor.

En China paré en "la Ceja" y comí fritada  
La mejor de Nuevo León  
Su dueño me dio cerveza para botana  
Y brindando dice, "Adiós".

And your love  
Because the emptiness that you leave  
Without reason  
Another love will fill  
Yes it will fill.

The day you finally get tired  
speaking with sincerity  
I say, just like the old saying goes,  
"There's no need to worry, it's he who  
Has decided to leave."

### GOODBYE ANGELITA RIVAS

So long Angelita Rivas de la Rivera  
I'm going far away from here.  
If I can cross the river I'll go to Texas  
And from there on to Tennessee.

I'm not going as a bracero but as a wetback,  
All I want is to just get away from here.  
I don't want my friends to know that  
I went to your wedding, you would laugh at me.

I know your little husband has plenty of bucks,  
And that he bought your heart.  
My cow, my six goats and my sheep  
Are worthless things to you.

In the town of China I stopped by "La Ceja"  
And had the best fritada in Nuevo León.  
The owner bought me a beer, and  
Toasting my health, said "So long."

Si ven cerca de Reynosa o de Matamoros  
A un ranchero de Nuevo León  
No le hable ni diga nada, que va de paso  
A olvidar un mal amor.

Si la inmigración me pesca al cruzar el Bravo  
Les diré: "Mister, por favor,  
Me lleven como soldado ante el tío de piocha  
Y que me mande al Japón."

Adiós Angelita Rivas de la Rivera  
Y mi barrio "Nacional"  
Adiós Cerro de la Silla, y la Sierra Madre  
No los volveré a mirar.

If you see a rancher near Reynosa  
Or Matamoros, a rancher from Nuevo León,  
Don't speak to him or talk about him,  
He's trying to forget his ruined love.

If the immigration catches me crossing the Bravo  
I'll tell them "Mister, please take me  
To see Uncle Sam, and send me  
Off as a soldier to fight the Japanese."

Goodbye Angelina Rivas de la Rivera  
And my old neighborhood "Nacional,"  
Goodbye Saddleback Mountain and the Sierra Madre  
I'll never see you again.

### 19. LE FALTA UN CLAVO A MI CRUZ

Le falta un clavo a mi cruz  
Pa' morir crucificado.  
Mis pobres ojos sin luz  
No miran ya mi pasado.

Me bebí mi propia vida  
En una copa mortal.  
Y por una sola herida  
Se presentó lo fatal.

Coro:  
Aquí estoy crucificado  
Con tanta desilusión  
Sólo me hace falta un clavo  
En mitad del corazón.

Clávalo tú por favor  
Para que acabe mi pena.  
Quiero morirme de amor  
Porque muerte es muy buena.

### JUST ONE MORE NAIL IN MY CROSS

My cross needs one more nail  
So I can die crucified.  
My poor eyes have no more light  
And can no longer see my past.

I drank my own life down  
In one fatal cup,  
And for just one wound  
My life has come to an end.

Chorus:  
Here I am crucified  
With so much disillusionment,  
I need just one more nail  
Through the middle of my heart.

Nail it in yourself, please  
And end my suffering  
I want to die in love  
Because it is a good way to end.



## LYDIA MENDOZA

Lydia Mendoza was born in Houston, Texas in 1916. Her family moved frequently, but Lydia was able to learn to sing and play stringed instruments from both her grandmother and her mother, Leonor, in Monterrey, N.L. The Mendoza family moved definitively back to Texas in 1927, and Lydia, as part of the family group Cuarteto Carta Blanca, made her first recordings for the Okeh company in San Antonio in the spring of the following year. The family spent the years between 1928-35 playing for tips in the streets, markets and parks of Texas and the Midwest. From 1932-35 the family performed in the Plaza del Zacate (Haymarket Square) in San Antonio, where Lydia came to the attention of Manuel J. Cortez, a pioneer of Mexican-American radio broadcasting. Lydia's local success as a live radio performer set the stage for her recordings for the Blue Bird company in 1934, one of which, ("*Mal Hombre*"), became an overnight success of unprecedented proportions. This led to an intensive career of touring and recording that was only interrupted by WW II. After the war Lydia resumed her career, and recorded for all of the important post-war Mexican-American labels, including Discos Ideal. Although Lydia dominates an incredibly broad repertoire of songs, she has composed relatively few herself. One of her personal favorites, however, is "*Amor Bonito*," which she wrote thinking of her husband while out on tour. Lydia Mendoza was undeniably the first real female star of Mexican-American music and her recordings, both solo and with the family group, undoubtedly inspired many of the other female artists that are heard in this collection. Lydia continued performing and recording until 1988, when a stroke slowed her career.

### 20. AUNQUE ME ODIES

Quiero mirarme en esos ojos  
Que me desprecian  
Quiero besar tus labios rojos  
Que me maldicen  
Quiero sentir el palpitir  
Cuando suspiras  
Y así decirte que aunque me odies  
Seré tu amor.

### EVEN IF YOU HATE ME

I want to see myself in your eyes  
That despise me so much,  
I want to kiss those lips of yours  
That speak evil of me.  
I want to hear your heartbeat  
When you sigh  
And to tell you that although you hate me  
I will always be your love.

Entre tus ojos miro el desprecio  
Que tú me guardas  
Entre tus labios hallo el veneno  
Que me has de dar  
Déjame verme en esos ojos  
Aunque me hieran.  
Déjame verte, aunque me muera  
Después de amar.

## HERMANAS MENDOZA

María (1922-1990) and Juanita (1927) Mendoza were both born in Monterrey, N.L. María, like her sister Lydia, an accomplished string musician as well as a singer, was already part of the Mendoza family group that began singing in the Plaza del Zacate in 1932. Little sister Juanita learned singing, dancing and comic routines in the *carpas* (tent shows) where her mother Leonor and older sisters would appear during these years. After sister Lydia's success as a recording artist, both María and Juanita would hone their talents as part of the family *variedad* that toured until 1941. During the war years, while Lydia temporarily retired to concentrate on raising her children, Juanita and María achieved local success singing as the *dueto Hermanas Mendoza*. After the war, Juanita and María resumed touring along with sister Lydia and the family *variedad*. Recordings on the Azteca label from Los Angeles, however, revealed that the duo of the Hermanas Mendoza had a tremendous appeal all its own. They toured and recorded extensively on their own until shortly after their mother's death in 1952. As so often seems to have happened, it was the marriage of one of the sisters that brought this seminal *dueto* to a premature end while still in its prime.

### 21. PUENTES QUEMADOS

Voy a quemar los puentes cuando cruce  
Así no hay regreso por segunda vez a ti.  
Las llamaradas que produzcan mis desprecios  
Te harán que sufras como tú me hiciste a mí.

Coro:  
Puentes quemados, han cerrado mi regreso.  
Así lo quiso este amor que yo te di.  
No cruzarán ni siquiera tus desprecios,  
Porque es preciso que me olvide yo de ti.

I see the disdain in your eyes  
That you reserve for me.  
In your lips I find the poison  
That you have to give me.  
Let me look into your eyes,  
Although you wound me,  
Let me look at you, although I die  
After loving you.

### BURNED BRIDGES

I'm going to burn the bridges once I cross  
So that I won't be able to return to you.  
The cries that my disdain will draw from you  
Will make you suffer as you have made me.

Chorus:  
Burned bridges have closed the way back,  
As the love I gave you wanted it so.  
Nothing shall cross, not even your reproaches  
Because it is important that I forget you.

Voy a quemar los puentes cuando cruce  
 Así no hay regreso al desprecio de tu amor.  
 Y seguiré buscando entre la nada  
 Amor que sepa comprenderme mi dolor.

## 22. AMOR BONITO

El mundo estará muy lleno  
 De amores y de querencias  
 Pero para me hay uno solo  
 Que da luz a mi existencia.

Mi amor es retebonito,  
 Brillante como un lucero  
 En las tristezas de mi alma  
 Me alegra con su recuerdo.

Doy gracias a mi Diosito,  
 Por lo bueno que es conmigo  
 Que siempre oye mis plegarias  
 A todo lo que le pido.

Amor bonito, bonito,  
 Cariño, mi cariño.

Amor bonito, bonito,  
 Cariño, mi cariño.  
 Te quiero porque te quiero,  
 Porque eres mi amor bonito.

Tu amor es retebonito  
 Radiante como una estrella  
 Que pensado en tu cariño  
 Se acaban todas mis penas.

Doy gracias a mi Diosito  
 Por lo bueno que es conmigo.  
 Que siempre oye mis plegarias  
 A todo lo que le pido.

I'm going to burn the bridges once I cross  
 That way I can't return to your  
 deceitful heart love  
 I'll continue to search hopelessly  
 For the one who will understand my pain.

## BEAUTIFUL LOVE

The world could be full  
 Of love and romances  
 But for me there is only one  
 That has lighted my existence.

My love is extra beautiful  
 Bright as a shining star  
 In the sadness of my soul  
 I brighten when it comes to mind.

I give thanks to my dear God  
 For being so good to me  
 For always hearing my prayers  
 And everything that I ask.

My beautiful little love,  
 My darling, my little darling.

Beautiful beautiful love of mine,  
 My darling, my dear one.  
 I love you because I love you,  
 Because you are my beautiful love.

Your love is extra beautiful  
 Radiant like a shining star  
 Thinking of your tenderness  
 Puts an end to all my sorrows.

I give thanks to my dear God  
 For being so good to me.  
 For always hearing my prayers,  
 And everything that I ask.



Chelo Silva, above  
 Lydia Mendoza, left:

*"Las Grandes de Tejas"*



T E J A N O R O O T S:

## THE WOMEN

(1946 - 1970)



Over 60 Minutes of Classic TEJANO MUSIC

1. **Carmen y Laura:** QUE COBARDE (What A Coward)
2. **Carmen y Laura:** ANGEL MIO (My Angel)
3. **Carmen y Laura:** SE ME FUE MI AMOR  
(My Love Has Gone)
4. **Las Abajeñas:** PERDON MUJER (Forgive Me, Woman)
5. **Las Abajeñas:** YA NO QUIERO QUE ME QUIERAS  
(I Don't Want You to Love Me Anymore)
6. **Hermanas Fraga :** AMOR PENDIENTE (Love Left Waiting)
7. **Rosita Fernández:** MI FRACASO (My Ruin)
8. **Hermanas Segovia:** TIENES OTROS AMORES  
(You Have Other Loves)
9. **Hermanas Segovia:** NO QUIERO ESPERAR  
(I Don't Want to Wait)
10. **Delia y Laura:** CONTESTACION A MI CAFETAL  
(Answer to My Coffee Plantation)
11. **Rosita y Laura:** LA TRAIIDORA (Unfaithful Woman)
12. **Rosita y Laura:** ESPERANDO (Waiting)
13. **Hermanas Cantú:** LA QUE SEA (Whoever Comes Along)
14. **Hermanas Guerrero:** RAMA SECA (Dry Branch)
15. **Hermanas Guerrero:** LA CASADA (The Married Woman)
16. **María Luisa Guerrero:** CARTA DE LUTO  
(Letter of Mourning)
17. **Chelo Silva:** SI ACASO VUELVES (In Case You Return)
18. **Las Rancheritas:** ADIOS ANGELITAS RIVAS  
(Goodbye Angelita Rivas)
19. **Las Rancheritas:** LE FALTA UN CLAVO A MI CRUZ  
(Just One More Nail in My Cross)
20. **Lydia Mendoza:** AUNQUE ME ODIES  
(Even if You Hate Me)
21. **Hermanas Mendoza:** PUENTES QUEMADOS  
(Burned Bridges)
22. **Lydia Mendoza:** AMOR BONITO (Beautiful Love)

Total Time - 61:06

These pioneer women recording artists cover the wide spectrum of Mexican - American music and song. Until the 1940s **Lydia Mendoza** was the only female star of Tejano music whose repertoire and voice appealed to every strata of Spanish speaking society throughout the Americas. By 1946, when **Ideal Records**, under the able direction of Armando Marroquin, began recording Tejano music in South Texas, **Carmen & Laura**, accompanied by *conjunto* and *orquesta* giants like **Conjunto Bernal**, **Narciso Martinez** and **Beto Villa**, had become the label's first women stars. Here are the pure country-style rancheras of the **Guerrero Sisters** along with the sophisticated boleros of **Chelo Silva** and **Rosita Fernandez**. A 24 page booklet with detailed information, photographs, and song lyrics is enclosed.



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