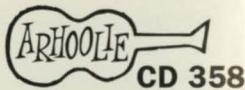


VALERIO LONGORIA

Texas Conjunto Pioneer



1. VIEJA ESCALERA (DAR)
(Ranchera) (ID 1119A)
2. PASA TIEMPO (Erasmus Ruiz)
(Bolero) (ID 968B)
3. LA FILOMENA (Valerio Longoria)
(Polka) (ID 1044A)
4. SI TU TE VAS (Valerio Longoria)
(Ranchera) (ID 1178 A)
5. LOS DESENGAÑOS (DAR)
(Ranchera) (ID 1178B)
6. YO TE QUIERO A TI (Cristobal Clarich)
(Bolero) (ID 1164A)
7. AMOR CON INTERES (Valerio Longoria)
(Ranchera) (ID 935A)
8. AMOR DE TORERO (DAR)
(Pasodoble) (ID 1091A)
9. CIUDAD VICTORIA (DAR)
(Polka) (ID 1301B)
10. NADA PERDI (Valerio Longoria)
(Canción) (ID 635)
11. LO DUDO (Valerio Longoria)
(Bolero) (ID 1091B)
12. SECA TU LLANTO (DAR)
(Ranchera) (ID 1032A)
13. EN DONDE ESTAS (DAR)
(Ranchera) (ID 1672B)
14. ADIOS MUCHACHOS (DAR)
(Bolero) (ID 2275A)
15. LOS ALBAÑILES (Juan Gaytán)
(Ranchera) (ID 2286A)
16. BUSCANDO UN CARIÑO
(Frank Cantú) (Bolero) (ID 2176A)
17. ABRE LOS OJOS (DAR)
(Ranchera) (ID 2286B)
18. ESCARCHA (Augustin Lara)
(Bolero) (ID 2255B)
19. QUE SALARETE (Frank Cantu)
(Ranchera) (ID 2176B)
20. CANTO A VERACRUZ (DAR)
(Huapango) (ID 2301B)
21. RAMON DELGADO
(arr. by Valerio Longoria) (Tragedia)
22. RAMONA (DAR) (Vals)
23. SAN QUILMAS BENDITO
(M. Valdez & A. Berlanga) (Ranchera)

Valerio Longoria – accordion & vocals
and his Conjunto (details inside on
page 15).

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TEJANO ROOTS

Valerio Longoria

TEXAS CONJUNTO PIONEER

Featuring La Tragedia de
RAMON DELGADO



VALERIO LONGORIA

Tejano Conjunto Pioneer

Valerio Longoria is today recognized as one of the pioneers of Tejano Conjunto Music. He is one of the genre's most versatile accordionists, a major innovator, composer, and one of its best singers able to beautifully interpret a romantic *bolero*, a heart-breaking *ranchera* or a stark historic *corrido*. This CD brings you 23 classic performances by Valerio Longoria, recorded over a period of almost forty years. Featured is the protest *corrido*, *Ramón Delgado*, which details a civil rights tragedy which occurred in south Texas in 1923.

The opening selection, *Vieja Escalera*, from 1951, spotlights an unusual trio vocal by Valerio, Juan Valdez, and Agapito Zúñiga. Agapito, another legend in the history of Conjunto music, also adds the unusual sound of a second accordion to this *conjunto* masterpiece. On three songs, (#16, 18, & 19), Valerio is joined

by the remarkable, clear and pure voice of Freddie Fender, who was reviving his own singing career and working part-time as a recording engineer for **Ideal Records** in the early 1960s. Among this CD's last three selections, which were recorded in 1990, is the lovely old waltz, *Ramona* and the local San Antonio *pachuco* low-life classic, *San Quilmas Bendito*.

Historically, this CD's most powerful song is *Ramón Delgado*. Unlike the widely known *corrido* about Gregorio Cortez which is still sung today, the facts surrounding the tragic death of Ramón Delgado in 1923 are clouded by the mist of history. The story of Ramón Delgado probably would have been forgotten by now had it not been for a recording which was made on August 30, 1931, in San Antonio by Pedro Rocha and Lupe Martínez, the most popular and prolific singers of *corridos* at the time.

Released in two parts, *Ramón Delgado* filled both sides of a 78 rpm disc (Vocalion 8462). During my 30 years of intensively collecting records of south Texas music, I have only found one copy of this disc: in the home of a San Antonio resident. I am not sure why I even bothered to accept the record because I had never heard of Ramón Delgado and the record was in terrible condition — it was totally worn out from many plays. I am a persevering collector, however, and knowing that I did not have a recording of that *corrido*, I wanted to keep it just so that someone might one day listen to the story.

When Prof. Guillermo Hernández was searching through my record collection a few years ago looking for historically interesting *corridos* relating to the **Chicano Experience**, he came across the record of *Ramón Delgado* and taped it even though the singers were hard to understand due to the enormous amount of surface noise. Eventually Prof. Hernández published his transcription of the

corrido in **Canciones De La Raza**. Since it was not possible for me to re-issue the worn-out copy of the record, I showed the text to Valerio Longoria during his 1990 visit to California when he was making some recordings for me. Valerio became rather fascinated by the verses and agreed to re-record the *corrido*. To the person in San Antonio who had bought that original 78, the story of Ramón Delgado was obviously a very moving, emotional, and important one, proven by the fact that the record was played over and over, wearing out the grooves to the point of making the text almost unintelligible.

Although the killing of Ramón Delgado took place on 1923, the ballad heard here was not recorded until 1931. I do not know when it was composed but the record label credits a J. Hernández as the author. Commercial recordings of Mexican-American music and songs were not undertaken on a large scale until after 1928 by which time the electrical recording process was in general use. All three

major recording companies were releasing many *corridos* (in two parts on both sides of a 78 rpm record) by the early 30s when such true story songs apparently enjoyed enormous popularity. Rocha and Martínez recorded the popular *corrido* about Gregorio Cortez in 1929 and they, and/or the recording directors, were probably encouraged by that record's success

to come up with similarly powerful regional material.

I wish to thank Roberto de Leon of San Antonio and Prof. James Nicolopoulos at UT–Austin for their help and research and for inspiring a graduate student, Yolanda O. Torres, at UT–Austin to summarize the story of Ramón Delgado, which follows.

(Chris Strachwitz — editor)

RAMÓN DELGADO

The ballad of *Ramón Delgado* is an example of the hostile relationships between the Mexican-American and Anglo communities of south Texas during the early decades of the twentieth century. It is a story which highlights the unfair treatment that Hispanics could expect from a legal system dominated by the Anglo culture. But what makes this ballad particularly interesting is the directness of the accusations against the Anglo establishment and the call for a unified plan of action by Mexican-Americans. *Ramón Delgado* was not just another

story, it was a testimony within the popular culture and a cry for action on behalf of the Mexican-Americans.

The ballad of *Ramón Delgado* might have achieved its popularity because it expressed the anger and frustration of living in a state of oppression and fear. These concerns were apparently shared by the community at large to such an extent that the Mexican consul chose to become involved as a representative of the Mexican population by providing an attorney for the Delgado family in the court proceedings against Delgado's killer. That

a foreign government was compelled to intervene to insure at least the appearance of fair play demonstrated the tremendous lack of faith and trust in the Texas legal system to provide equal justice for all parties.

The 1920s were a time when authority was not questioned, especially not by those people who were seen as imported hands and little more. Yet this ballad attacked the racist society of the time and appealed to the power of the collective in fighting against abuse. It saw the killing of Ramón Delgado as a rallying point for the Mexican-American community and a chance to speak the truth about the terrible injustices which the *gringo* society had inflicted upon the immigrants and their children. While the Texas valley was specified as the setting for this abusive situation, the language of the ballad was so strong that it stood as an indictment against the entire Anglo power structure.

The killing of Ramón Delgado caused extensive controversy in the area and even resulted in the cancel-

lation of local "Cincó de Mayo" festivities. Mr. Delgado's killer, S. P. Childress, was indicted on a murder charge but was found not guilty by a jury of his peers a few weeks after the killing. Ramón Delgado, Jr. had been involved in an altercation with Childress' son and was charged with assault with intent to murder, but that charge was dismissed because the boy was only seventeen years old. Each side had its adamant supporters who were determined to report the "truth" of the event. The different attitudes concerning the death of Ramón Delgado were typified by two of San Antonio's newspapers: the English language **San Antonio Express** and the Spanish language **La Prensa**. The accounts given by both newspapers established some common facts basic to the case, but varied a good deal in the information given and in the style they used to report it. **The San Antonio Express** emphasized the self-defense argument claimed by the Anglo who killed Mr. Delgado while **La Prensa** stressed the

need to guarantee justice in a case dealing with a Mexican-American victim. A local newspaper, the **Hondo Anvil Herald**, had yet another version of the facts of the case but it paralleled the representation found in **The San Antonio Express**. The Hondo paper emphasized the elder

Childress' claim of self-defense and his cooperation with the legal authorities. The reporting officer reflected these different perspectives because it aimed at distinctly separate audiences, as can be seen in the articles cited below.

(Yolanda O. Torres, University of Texas at Austin)

MEXICAN IS KILLED

Boys' Quarrel Over Mules Is Fatal to Father of One

Moore, Tex., April 20—A Mexican, whose name was not given, was shot and killed at Yancey Thursday by the father of Poke Childress when he entered the latter's yard in defiance of an order to "keep away."

The shooting, according to a report made by officers who rushed to the scene from here, followed an argument between Poke Childress and the son of the slain man, which occurred when the Mexican boy stabbed Childress over the heart. The argument, it was stated, was

over the ownership of some mules.

According to the elder Childress he saw the Mexican approaching the house and ordered him to keep away. The Mexican, however, continued toward the building and was shot as he neared the door.

The Mexican boy, who fled after stabbing the younger Childress, was captured and is being held by officers. He has not made a statement.

San Antonio Express,
Saturday April 21, 1923

A FATAL AFFRAY

As a result of an affray on the Childress farm, a few miles west of Yancey early Thursday morning, Ramon Delgado, Sr., is dead and Ramon Delgado, Jr., is confined in the county jail.

Particulars of the unfortunate occurrence are meager, but from the best information obtainable, it seems the trouble, which led up to the killing, occurred Wednesday, the result of a dispute concerning the use of a team. The difficulty was renewed early Thursday morning when young Childress went to the field to work, he being attacked by the senior Delgado and his son, the younger Delgado, wielding a knife, stabbing young Childress in the left breast. Childress Sr. went to the aid of his son with a shotgun, emptying the contents of the gun into the breast of the deceased

who was advancing on him after being repeatedly ordered to stop. The elder Childress telephoned Sheriff Bader who went to the scene of the killing, some seventy-five yards from the Childress residence and turned the body of the deceased over to relatives and friends for interment. The younger Delgado attempted to escape after his attack on the young Childress, but was later captured in Yancey, and was brought to town and placed in jail.

Mr. Childress, while not placed under arrest, nevertheless came to town, bringing his son for surgical attention. His wound was not serious as he warded off the blow of the Mexican youth, otherwise it is probable that he would have received a critical wound.

The grand jury, now in session, is investigating the unfortunate occurrence.

From **The Hondo Anvil - Herald**, April 19, 1923

The Killer of the Mexican Ramón Delgado is brought before the authorities.

Hondo, Texas, April 19. — Mr. S. P. Childers, a well-known farmer from this area, has been brought before the authorities of this town, declaring that he was the person who killed the Mexican Ramón Delgado, seventy years old, whose body was found two days ago near Yancey.

In his declaration, Childers confessed that a dispute over property was the cause of the quarrel in the death of the old man Delgado.

Childers alleges that he killed in legitimate self-defense.

The sheriff of this town ordered that Mr. Childers be taken immediately before the Medina County court where testimony will be taken and the case will be investigated.

Up until today, there is no indication that the Mexican Consulate in San Antonio has taken any measures to insure that justice is done in this case.

From **La Prensa**, Saturday April 21, 1923 –
translated by Prof. James Nicolopoulos

The Festivities Under Preparation in Yancey, Texas Will Be Canceled.

Yancey, Texas, April 23 —

The festival that the Honorific Subcommittee of this town had prepared to celebrate the anniversary of the Battle of Puebla this coming May 5 has been cancelled due to causes beyond the control of the organizers.

The Honorific Subcommittee adopted this policy upon making some investigations about the death of Señor Ramón Delgado, which occurred the 18th of this month and for which the American S. P. Childress has confessed himself guilty before a judge,

and which has angered some friends of Señor Childress, and has been the cause of their unjustly persecuting various members of the Subcommittee, accusing them of crimes that they have not committed.

Because the celebrations of this date (May 5) always include some that take place outside in the open air, the Subcommittee, in its meeting last Sunday, decided to cancel all of these festivities in order to avoid any difficulties that could occur during the ceremonies that had been organized.

From **La Prensa**, Thursday April 26, 1923 –
translated by Prof. James Nicolopoulos

On May 7, 1923, S.P. Childress appeared in court and plead not guilty to the charge of murdering Ramón Delgado. On May 8, 1923, the jury returned a verdict of not guilty.

(Court records — District Court of Medina County, Texas)

RAMÓN DELGADO

(J. Hernández)

Año de mil novecientos
veintitrés que se contó,
en ese pueblo de Hondo,
Ramón Delgado murió.

Y ese pueblo de Hondo,
está corriendo mala fama,
que matan al mexicano
nomás porque les da gana.

Ahi su esposa lo lloraba,
su hijita con más razón,
de ver a su padre muerto
preso su hermano Ramón.

En esa cárcel del Hondo,
Ramón chico se encontraba,
y el estaba inocente
lo que en su casa pasaba.

El carcelero le dijo: –
¿No sabes lo que ha pasado?
que en el rancho donde vives
a tu padre lo han matado.

The year nineteen hundred
and twenty-three that just past,
in the town of Hondo,
Ramón Delgado was killed.

That town of Hondo
is getting a bad reputation;
there they kill Mexicans
just because they feel like it.

His wife wept for him
and his daughter suffered,
seeing her father dead and
her brother Ramón in jail.

Young Ramón was being held
in the jail of Hondo
and was unaware of
what was happening at home.

The jailer told him,
"Have you heard what's happened?
Over at your ranch
they've killed your father."

Al oír esa noticia pues
¿cómo se quedaría?
preso en la cárcel del Hondo
porque así le convendría.

Me dispensarán los gringos
que hable de su gran valor,
que matan al mexicano
por quitarle su labor.

Yo les digo la verdad,
estoy bastante ofendido,
al cabo si a mí me matan
ya mi padre está tendido.

Yo lo siento por me hermana
y por mi madre querida,
ya a mi padre mataron,
yo ya no quiero la vida.

Y si yo pago en la misma porque
digo la verdad,
ruéguelo a Dios sagrado
que ese día se llegará.

Todos debíamos de unirnos
y mirarnos como hermanos,
ahi miren lo que nos pasa,
a todos los mexicanos.

When he heard the news,
well, how do you think he felt?
Locked up in the jail of Hondo
because he'd be better off that way.

The gringos will forgive me
if I speak of their brave deeds;
they kill Mexicans
to take away what they worked for.

I tell them the truth
This is a great offense!
let them kill me
just like they did my father.

I'm sorry for my sister
and my dear mother,
they've killed my father,
life is not worth living.

If I pay with my life
for speaking the truth,
pray to the Holy Lord
that the day will come.

We should all be united
and treat each other like brothers,
Look at what is happening
to all of us Mexicans.

El mexicano es tan hombre
y los en cualquier terreno,
porque se sabe morir
en su pueblo y en el ajeno.

Aquí en el estado de Texas
no nos juzgan con conciencia,
si no nos mandan al 'orca
se nos da una penitencia.

Vuela, vuela palomita,
veula para el otro lado,
anda avisarle a mis padres
que murió Ramón Delgado.

Yo con ésta ahí me despido
al pie de este verde prado,
Ramón aquí termina el corrido
del señor Ramón Delgado.

Yo con ésta ahí me despido
porque mi suerte es así,
les encargo a mis amigos
que hagan recuerdo de mí.

The Mexican is very manly,
he's like that anywhere,
because he knows how to die
in his own or in a foreign land.

Here in the state of Texas
they don't judge us with a conscience,
when they don't send us to the gallows,
they sentence us to jail.

Fly, fly, little dove,
fly to the other side,
tell my parents
that Ramón Delgado has died.

Now with this I bid farewell
at the edge of this green field,
here ends the ballad
of Mr. Ramón Delgado.

Now with this I bid farewell
because this is my fate,
I leave it up to you, my friends,
to keep a remembrance of him.

SAN QUILMAS BENDITO

Although the Pachuco movement (as it came to be known) is believed to have started in El Paso (borrowing certain elements from Mexico City) some time prior to 1920, it wasn't until the late 1930s and early 1940s that it began to have any significant impact on Mexican American youth culture. The movement reached its zenith during the years of World War II in southern California as evidenced in the Zoot Suit riots in Los Angeles, which Luis Valdez documented so memorably in his play and film, **Zoot Suit**. The movement also travelled to other areas where concentrations of Mexican American youth were growing up including south Texas where *San Quilmas Bendito* was written. Remembered for the exaggerated clothing and hair styles, the movement also affected language usage, modifying English and Spanish words and phrases and inventing new terms, often with ingenious originality. This

language modification became known as *caló*.

Consistently this desire to change and modify existing language usage affected the name of virtually every community where Mexican American youth could be found; thus San Antonio became San Quilmas. This *corrido* (a story-telling ballad) emphasized that these young individuals really knew their way around — were “hip” in the English language jargon of the time. There is emphasis on their persecution, reflective of the fact that these young people really didn't fit in either American or Mexican culture (“for one slip they gave me three years”) as well as idealization of the drug culture as it was known at the time.

The concluding verse “Good-bye blessed San Antonio” is a farewell (a *despedida*) which is common to most *corridos*, appropriately concluding the story.

(Philip Sonnichsen)

SAN QUILMAS BENDITO (Blessed San Antonio)

(Manuel Valdez & Andres Berlanga)

Cuando yo vine a San Quilmas
solano y sin conocer
me dio por buscar camello
pero nada puede hacer.

Los chavos de la paloma
que eran suaves pa' buscar
me pusieron muy al alba
ay pronto aprendí a jambar.

En la carcel me tuvieron
nomás por un resbalón
me dieron mis tres abriles
ay allí los puse de un jalón.

Yo no escamo de nada
conozco el rejuego bien.
conosco a la palomilla
y a la justicia también.

Estando forjando un frajo
la chota nos licorió
Miguel salió de estampida
pero aquel Maiko torció.

When I came to San Antonio,
alone and without knowing anyone,
I tried to find myself a job
but I couldn't do a thing.

The boys in the gangs
were good at getting around
they showed me the ropes,
and soon I was one of them.

They put me in jail
just for one slip
they gave me three years
which I served straight through.

I don't run away from anything
I know all the tricks
I know the gangs and
the justice system as well.

I was rolling a smoke
when the cops nabbed us
Miguel left in a hurry
but that guy Mikey turned snitch.

Conosco bien la tecata
la coca es buena mujer
la greta es amiga mía
no la puedo aborrecer.

Adiós San Quilmas bendito
ya me despido de ti,
adiós gallinas culecas
ay se acordarán de mí.

(Continued from back cover)

- #1: **Agapito Zúñiga** – vocal and second accordion; **Juan Valdez** – third voice; **Amadeo Flores** – *bajo sexto*.
#2: **Ray Montevais** – second voice.
#3: **Chuy Compean** – saxophone.
#5: **Cristobal Clarice** – second voice & guitar; **Rudolfo Leal** – guitar & *requinto*.
#6: **Cristobal Clarice** – second voice.
#8: **Reynaldo Barrero** – *bajo sexto*.
#10: **Frank Cantu** – guitar.
#16, 18, & 19: **Freddie Fender** – vocal.
#21: **Juan Garcia** – second voice & *bajo sexto*.
#22 & 23: **Valerio Longoria Jr.** – second voice.
Transcription and translation of *Ramon Delgado* by Guillermo Hernández and Yolanda Zepeda; of *San Quilmas Bendito* by Zack and Juanita Salem with help from James

I know heroin real well
and cocaine is a good woman,
marijuana is a friend of mine
I can't put her down.

Good-bye blessed San Antonio
I'll say good-bye to you now,
good-bye all you burned out old hens
ay, you'll be remembering me.

- Nicolopulos and Salomé Gutiérrez.
#1 – 20 recorded for IDEAL Records of San Benito, Tx. between 1951 and 1963. Produced by Armando Marroquin.
21 – 23 recorded for Arhoolie Records in Berkeley, Ca. in 1990 with Valerio Longoria 4th – drums & Flavio Longoria – alto. Produced by Chris Strachwitz.

Cover photo by Chris Strachwitz
Cover by Wayne Pope
Edited and produced by Chris Strachwitz

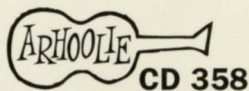
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VALERIO LONGORIA

Texas Conjunto Pioneer



Historic Recordings 1951-1990

1. VIEJA ESCALERA (*Ranchera*)
2. PASA TIEMPO (*Bolero*)
3. LA FILOMENA (*Polka*)
4. SI TU TE VAS (*Ranchera*)
5. LOS DESENGAÑOS (*Ranchera*)
6. YO TE QUIERO A TI (*Bolero*)
7. AMOR CON INTERES (*Ranchera*)
8. AMOR DE TORRERO (*Pasodoble*)
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21. RAMON DELGADO (*Tragedia*)
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Valerio Longoria – accordion & vocals and his Conjunto, details inside booklet.

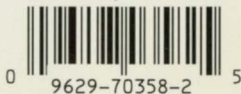
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Cover photo by Chris Strachwitz.

Cover by Wayne Pope

Edited and produced by Chris Strachwitz

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