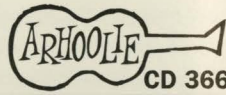


FREDDIE FENDER

"Canciones de Mi Barrio"



CD 366

THE ROOTS OF TEJANO ROCK

1. QUE MALA (How Bad)
2. HAY UN ALGO EN TU PENSAR
(There's Something on Your Mind)
3. HOLY ONE
4. DESDE QUE CONOSCO
(Since I Met You Baby)
5. YA ME VOY (Ain't That a Shame)
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(Devil in Disguise)
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17. LAS CEREZAS (The Cherries)
18. CAMISA NEGRA (Black Shirt)
19. LA VIEJA (The Old Lady)
20. VIEJOS AMIGOS (Old Friends)
21. PANTO PACHOS
22. MEAN WOMAN
23. NO ESTA AQUI (It's Not Here)
24. MAGIA DE AMOR (The Magic of Love)

Total Time: 69:02

Original recordings produced 1959 – 1961 and 1963 – 1964 for IDEAL Records of San Benito, Texas.

#1, 4, 7, 16, & 23 originally released as by Eddie Con Los Shades with René Moody – bass and Little Herman – drums. #10: guitar by Louis Moody. #11 & 12: accompanied by Los Compadres de Amado Soto. #20: accompanied by Conjunto de Carlos Hernandez. #24: with Carlos Cantú.

Edited by Davia Nelson and Chris Strachwitz
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Cover by Wayne Pope

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ROOTS OF TEJANO ROCK

Freddie Fender

Canciones de mi Barrio

BARRIO HITS FROM THE 50s AND 60s



CD 366

Canciones de Mi Barrio by Freddie Fender

Most people probably know Freddie Fender, whose real name is Baldemar Huerta, as the singer of the Country Music hits "Wasted Days and Wasted Nights" and "Before the Next Teardrop Falls" which put his name on every juke box and radio station in the US. Some may have been introduced to his sweet, emotional, and totally unique voice only recently hearing him sing as a member of the **Texas Tornados**. But decades before his current popularity or his Country hits of the 70s, he won legions of Tejano Music fans throughout Texas and the Southwest with his Spanish versions of rock, pop, and rhythm & blues. Some fans may even remember Freddie from back in the late 1950s when he got his start as "The Bebop Kid" singing Elvis Presley covers in Spanish and making Mexican-American rock history as "Eddie con Los Shades."

The songs on this collection are from that early period in Freddie Fender's life when he sang whatever really moved him or whatever he thought would be a hit, under whatever name he or the record company thought would sell. Traditional Mexican ranchera standards, the latest American pop hits which he translated and sang in Spanish, his own garage-rock style compositions, this is Freddie Fender at his pure and youthful best.

In November 1992, Freddie spoke with Davia Nelson about his life and the songs heard on this CD of **Canciones de Mi Barrio**.

Where does the music inside of me come from? I just started hearing it from the corners of the *barrio* in San Benito, Texas, where I grew up. On juke boxes, over the radio, in houses, from my mother, that's where it comes from. A lot of people confuse a city ghetto with the kind of *barrio* I'm talking about. We didn't have any street lights, no

pavement. The Western Auto had the only TV in town, which came in around '53, and everybody would go downtown and stand around their window and watch. In the early evening me and my band would rehearse in a garage. All the neighbors and kids and cars would gather outside and watch and listen into the night. We sang to the world from

that little garage.

I'm from the 50s. There's no "something new" for me. As modern as I try to get, it always comes out 50s. I lived through the 60s and 70s, but as far as the music I feel inside, it's the 50s, and even part of the 40s, music from when I was a young kid. That's what I have inside of me. Mostly slow dances and love songs, in English and Spanish. After about twenty-five years of age my clock didn't run anymore.

I was always different. I'm still different from what you call *La Onda Chicana* or Tejano Music. I'm from the same era, but I was never involved with it. I was always trying to do something in English. That was my thing since 1957 when I started recording with Falcon Records. I wasn't doing the *conjunto* stuff. I was doing rock and roll and ballads, just like I'm doing now, and rhythm and blues. *Conjunto* music didn't move me then, and the *orquestas* thought they were too hot shit for me. Now I'm beginning to feel the kind of music that I heard when I was a young person and enjoy performing the nitty gritty *conjunto* songs that I sing now with Flaco Jimenez and The Tornados.

I've recorded under all kinds of names. Rafael Ramirez of Falcon Records called me "Baldemar Huerta, The Bebop Kid." He wanted me to sing like Elvis Presley. You ever try to sing like Elvis Presley in Spanish? It was terrible. He'd send me back in the studio and say "No, no, get back, sing it again, I understood a couple of words." Finally I did it like he wanted so I could collect my twenty five bucks and get out.

In January of 1961 I recorded the album **Eddie Con Los Shades** under the name "Eddie Medina." I used that name because at that time I was still with Falcon under my real name, Baldemar Huerta. I chose Eddie Medina because my father's mother's last name was Medina. And Eddie, I just liked the name. The group was called "The Shades" because whoever played with me, I just put sunglasses on them. We all wore shades.

I also recorded under the name Scotty Wayne, and of course, Freddie Fender. I never recorded but I used to perform as "Little Bennie." I don't know why, I guess cause my grandfather's name was Bennie. See, in the 50s everybody was "Little." Little Richard, Little Freddie, Little Bennie, Little

Johnny, Little Micky, Little Anthony.

After Falcon, I started recording with the Duncan label. The songs *Mean Woman* and *Holy One* were with Duncan. Wayne Duncan was the first guy to embark on a project with me and put up all the money. He was just a guy who had a juke box route, he didn't know anything about making records. We recorded them both in a little room in a house that was a radio station in Brownsville, Texas. We used a monaural machine, just one track. That was in '59 or '60.

I wrote *Mean Woman* in English first. I wrote it again in Spanish and called it *Que Mala*. It was the flip side of *Holy One*, and it helped sell 280,000 records. It became #1. It was kind of weird because *Holy One* became #1 in San Antonio and *Mean Woman* became #1 in Ft. Worth and Dallas with KLIF. And then *Holy One* became #1 in Baton Rouge with WAIL and at the same time it also became #1 on WNOE and WTAX, New Orleans. Both songs were potential singles. Kinda weird. Since it wasn't pushed by a major label, just word of mouth or whatever disc jockey we'd go visit and hand it to. Hopefully he'd play it. Later on we got onto

Imperial Records, the same recording of it.

Holy One was first recorded in Spanish as *Hay Amor* on Falcon in '56 or '57 with *Don't be Cruel* on the other side. Then when I started with Duncan Records it became the same song, but in English, *Holy One*, with *Mean Woman* on the other side. A couple of years later we had a problem with the title *Holy One* as being religious or something. Instead of being understood as a tribute to a woman. Duncan worried so much that DJs would not play it that I had to change *Holy One* to *Only One*.

I think what we have here (on this CD) is a re-recording of *Holy One* which I did many of between the years trying to keep it going. I did this version for Rio Grande Music Company, Ideal Records in San Benito, Texas, on Houston Street, with Paco Bettancourt and Johnny Philips. They sold appliances, they had juke boxes. Next door, the senior citizens played dominoes and in the back was the studio for Ideal Records.

Paco Bettancourt, from Ideal Records, gave me a job when I was in Louisiana. I was doing time, about two and a half years, for a couple of "cigarettes" over there, me and my

bass player. In order for me to get parole I had to get a job, and so I asked Paco for a job. My job went from sweeping the sidewalk in front of the store in the morning, to sorting out records, to even recording other groups there. I learned to run a very simple monaural Ampex that he had there. I think I recorded as sound engineer an album by the legendary Lydia Mendoza and I recorded the best album that Tony De La Rosa ever had.

I remember when Lydia Mendoza came in, it was 1964, maybe early 1965. She came into the studio to rehearse. It was just her and the guitar. We knocked out the album in two days, or one day. I learned a trick from her that has helped me tremendously. She almost whispered her songs through the rehearsal, you could barely hear her. And then, when she was ready, then her lungs opened up like giant amplifiers! I couldn't believe the strength of this woman! She knew that her energy was very precious and she was saving it for the right time.

Lydia was just one of us. I have had admiration for singers, movie stars, and all of that, but I have never spent my time worshipping any of them. I have been too busy living

with myself. Now that I'm getting older I realize what a tremendous figure she has been. But even now I don't dwell on anybody else, I just live my life. I went through thirty years of making music without really thinking about whether I was going to have a future or not. I didn't think about that. Call it ignorance, call it "I don't care," but I was not business-minded and I couldn't care less. I always had somebody who wanted to hear me sing. I've away been fortunate in that aspect that my singing gave me a lot of kind hearts. They may not have become friends, but they were kind to me, they wanted to hear the music.

About the other songs in this collection, I was probably the engineer on some of these sessions. I would put the switch on and then run like hell to pick up the guitar with the boys waiting for me. We had Bennie Mendez on the bass. I played guitar, Lupe Hernandez on the rhythm guitar and lead. We had Robert Silva, "El Turkey," on drums, Carlos Cantu on horn, and probably a couple of other musicians I can't think of now. They were all from Brownsville or Harlingen.

Hay Un Algo En tu Pesar is from '61, I got

the words on that from *There is Something on Your Mind*, which I heard back in the 50s. *Ya Me Voy* and *Diablo con Antifaz*, they're songs that I started recording in '63 or '64 when rock in roll had gone into Mexico. In '57-'60 with Falcon, I was the first rock and roll they had in South America and Mexico. By '63, when I came back from Louisiana, they had songs like *Diablo con Antifaz*, or *Devil in Disguise*, and Mexico had really gotten on the ball with Mexican rock & roll. So I just copied an Elvis Presley song that had been done by Mexicans in Mexico and then I did it as a Mexican-American.

Que Soledad is a song I wrote that means *Oh Lonely Nights* or *Oh Lonely Me*. *La Banda Esta Borracha* I recorded with my bass player Johnny "Bennie" Mendez, who has passed away. I had a horn player from Harlingen, Carlos Cantú, and we recorded it in the same studios in San Benito. It was part of a Spanish album and it was just a popular song I jumped on. Mostly we kept an eye on the charts in Mexico and said, "OK, we gotta record this one or that one, it's hitting."

As far as me liking the song *La Banda Esta Borracha*, *The Band is Drunk*, no. I do want it

on this collection for historical reasons, because that was what was happening at that time. Like a lot of us musicians, we grab onto what is happening to help our careers. I covered the song.

Paloma Querida is a song I've always loved. I heard it sung by Jorge Negrete years before. *Mi Destino Fue Quererte* was a song that I've always loved. It's an old song and I wanted to sing it. *Indita Mia* came from Mexico. My mother sang it. It's an old song. *No Estes Soñando*, I wrote the words down to *I Hear You Knocking* and sang it in Spanish.

Corina, Corina is a translation of what Big Joe Turner sang. In Louisiana, over at "The Place," I became friends with the gentleman that had Gold Band Records, Eddie Shuler, and I did an album with him while I was in there.

Acapulco Rock, that was a big hit in Mexico, it was in the movies and everything. I wrote that one. *Camisa Negra* comes from Mexico. It's about a guy who comes from Northern Mexico with the *patillas*, the mustache and sombrero. His *camisa*, his shirt, is very well ironed, and he has new shoes like a Texan. He has a *vieja*, an old woman, but she's not old,

she's *jamona*, like ham. *Jamona* is a woman who's pretty old, but you can't tell because she's chunky and smooth. And when you're fat and look like ham you don't have wrinkles. So she's a *jamona* chick who don't look old, even though she's old. Anyway, he talks about the fact that he gets in a lot of trouble at the border. He always wears a black shirt and good boots and a good Texan hat.

I wrote *Pancho Pechos*. Johnny Mendez helped me with the words. It's about a crazy guy, a funny character. He was always strutting like a fighting rooster. He had one eye, he was really a clown, just a goofy guy who was trying to be a hero all the time. He had a shootout but he shot his girlfriend because he couldn't see the other guy.

Magia de Amor is a song I wrote entitled *The Magic of Love*. I did it in English first... "the magic of love thrills me..."

I've always gone into every music project with the intention of blowing up the world. No other intention but that. I think I've done that a little bit, but not really to the proportion I was hoping for. I'm 55 years old. I've done a lot of running, a lot of miles on bad gas. Only yesterday I was twenty. It's a feeling of

"I made it." In my youth I was always afraid of hunger, always afraid of not paying the rent, afraid of the cops, afraid I was gonna get busted, afraid my wife would leave me. I was always doing this or that. I had a hangover. I don't worry about that no more. It's an attitude of acceptance of what I believe my life is. The fact is that I don't know if I'm going to be here five minutes from now. That is what I believe is the greatest gift in life. That you accept life as a friend. And since life is my friend, I'm not afraid anymore.

Discography:

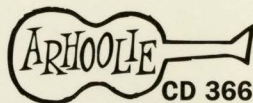
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"Canciones de Mi Barrio"



THE ROOTS OF TEJANO ROCK

1. **QUE MALA** (How Bad) (2:23)
2. **HAY UN ALGO EN TÚ PENSAR**
(There's Something on Your Mind) (2:56)
3. **HOLY ONE** (2:48)
4. **DESDE QUE CONOSCO**
(Since I Met You Baby) (2:34)
5. **YA ME VOY** (Ain't That a Shame) (2:38)
6. **DIABLO CON ANTIFAZ**
(Devil in Disguise) (2:27)
7. **QUE SOLEDAD** (Oh Lonely Me) (2:37)
8. **LA BANDA ESTA BORRACHA**
(The Band is Drunk) (2:36)
9. **DIME** (Tell Me) (2:45)
10. **PALOMA QUERIDA**
(Beloved Dove) (2:05)
11. **MI DESTINO FUE QUERERTE**
(My Destiny Was to Love You) (2:37)
12. **INDITA MIA** (My Indian Girl) (3:21)
13. **NO ESTES SOÑANDO**
(I Hear You Knocking) (2:40)
14. **CORINA, CORINA** (2:11)
15. **COMO UN ERRANTE**
(Like A Wanderer) (2:04)

16. **ACAPULCO ROCK** (2:22)
17. **LAS CEREZAS** (The Cherries) (2:47)
18. **CAMISA NEGRA** (Black Shirt) (1:48)
19. **LA VIEJA** (The Old Lady) (2:13)
20. **VIEJOS AMIGOS** (Old Friends) (2:43)
21. **PANCHO PECHOS** (4:21)
22. **MEAN WOMAN** (2:23)
23. **NO ESTA AQUI** (It's Not Here) (2:30)
24. **MAGIA DE AMOR** (The Magic of Love) (2:17)

Total Time: 69:02

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for IDEAL Records of San Benito, Texas.

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