

IVAN CUESTA y sus *Baltimore Vallenatos*
"A Ti, Colombia"



1. **A TI, COLOMBIA** (Ivan Cuesta) – 2. **LA TINAJITA** (DAR)
3. **ROBERTO RUIZ** (DAR) – 4. **EL MEDALLON** (DAR) – 5. **EL COMPAE MIGUE** (DAR) – 6. **PALMIREÑA** (DAR) – 7. **LA CASA EN EL AIRE** (DAR)
8. **LA PATILLALERA** (DAR) – 9. **LA QUINCE AÑERA** (DAR)
10. **EL CABALLO VIEJO** (DAR) – 11. **EL CHUPAFLORES** (DAR)
12. **EL PORRO VENEZOLANO** (DAR) – 13. **LA MUCURA** (DAR)
14. **CELIA** (Ivan Cuesta)

Ivan Cuesta – vocals & accordion; Lesly Jean Walker – midi guitar;
Andre Breckenridge – congas; Alfonso Rondon – bass & vocals;
José "Pepe" Rojas – timbales; Enrique Venegas – vocals.
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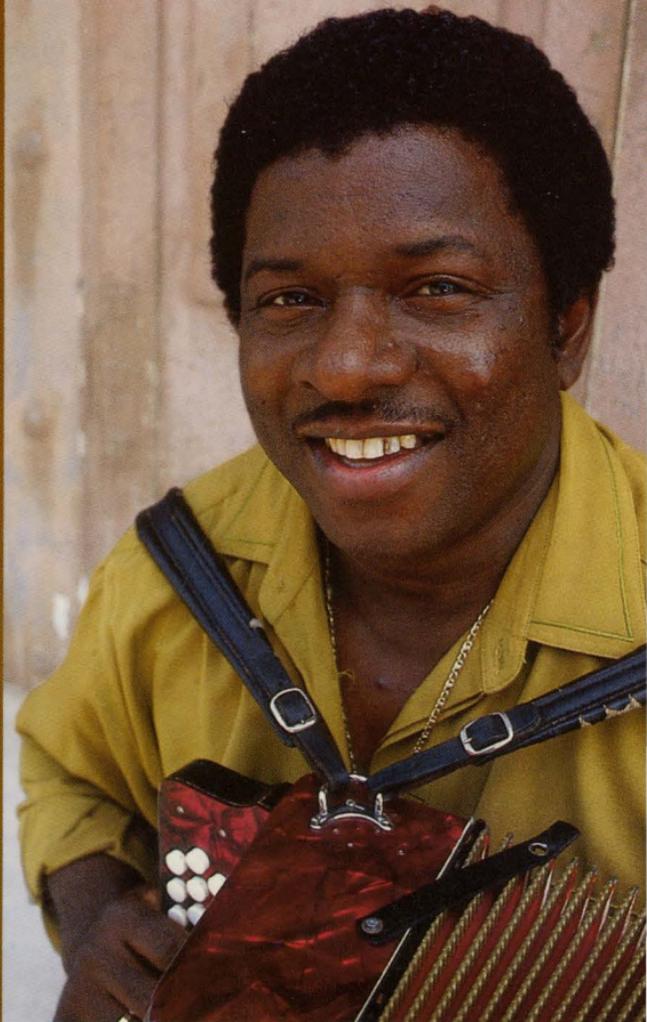


The Baltimore Vallenatos

Ivan Cuesta

**Y SUS
BALTIMORE
VALLENATOS**

"A Ti, Colombia"



IVAN CUESTA y sus Baltimore Vallenatos “A Ti, Colombia”

IVAN CUESTA was born in the village of Río Sucio (Dark River) near Quibdo in northern Colombia in 1946. Río Sucio is in the valley of the Río Atrato, one of the streams that flow northward from the Andes to the Colombian lowlands and the Caribbean. This is *vallenato* country.

His first encounter with the accordion came when a neighbor's daughter left one at the Cuesta home for safekeeping while her family was on vacation. Her father had been hearing too much beginning accordion and needed relief. When the family returned two weeks later, 12 year old Ivan was a budding accordionist and singer.

His first band was organized while in high school in Savanna, a village near Bucaramanga. The instrumentation

was for the oldest form of *vallenato*, one that mixes Spanish, African and Indian elements. Alfonso Lopes played the *caja* drum, William Centeno played the *guiro* and Ivan was singer-accordionist. They performed for the best local dances.

Ivan's first job away from home was in the Colombian oilfields and there he met what he laughingly calls “big gringos and big rednecks” who introduced him to musics of the North American working classes: Blues, Bluegrass, Country, Cajun, Tex-Mex. He liked all those musics and especially Country with steel guitars and fiddles. But he kept on playing *vallenato*.

He came to Baltimore on July 13, 1976, and began working for Domino Sugar. He has a wife, Antonia, a son, Allen, and an attractive home. He

likes his job and his city. “Say nice things about Baltimore,” he says, “It has been very good to me.”

Ivan has performed for *vallenato* devotees during all his years in Maryland, and the music of his group seems to have taken on a regional flavor, an echo of Baltimore's Colombian community. But in Ivan's view it is still deeply traditional. “You put yourself, your experiences, your best into the music,” he said. “You try to help it.”

He is now receiving national recognition. During the past three years Ivan and his group have performed at Wolf Trap, the famous performing arts park near Washington, D. C.; at New York's Carnegie Hall; at the Lowell Folk Festival in Massachusetts (now the largest folk event in the country), the National Folk Festival, and in the Neptune Plaza Concert Series at the Library of Congress, among others.

But Ivan is not terribly excited by any of this. He prefers hearing jokes

to hearing praise and he is full of wit and laughter. “Music is a way to be happy,” he says. “It lifts the spirit to sing and dance and is good for your health. I urge you not to smoke, be moderate with alcohol and food, work like hell, and sing and dance for an hour every day.”

(Joe Wilson – 1993)

The Maryland Council for the Arts provided partial support for the recording of these musicians through the National Council for the Traditional Arts.

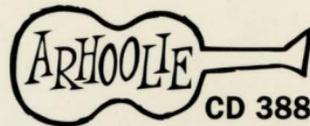
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IVAN CUESTA

y sus *Baltimore Vallenatos*
"A Ti, Colombia"



COLOMBIAN VALLENATO MUSIC

1. **A TI, COLOMBIA** (Ivan Cuesta) (3:00)
2. **LA TINAJITA** (DAR) (3:13)
3. **ROBERTO RUIZ** (DAR) (3:20)
4. **EL MEDALLON** (DAR) (3:36)
5. **EL COMPAE MIGUE** (DAR) (4:05)
6. **PALMIREÑA** (DAR) (3:47)
7. **LA CASA EN EL AIRE** (DAR) (2:29)
8. **LA PATILLALERA** (DAR) (5:16)
9. **LA QUINCE AÑERA** (DAR) (3:23)
10. **EL CABALLO VIEJO** (DAR) (6:34)
11. **EL CHUPAFLO** (DAR) (3:07)
12. **EL PORRO VENEZOLANO** (DAR) (2:56)
13. **LA MUCURA** (DAR) (2:58)
14. **CELIA** (Ivan Cuesta) (3:20)

Total Time: 51:04

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with: **Lesly Jean Walker** – midi guitar; **Andre Breckenridge** – congas; **Alfonso Rondon** – bass & vocals; **José "Pepe" Rojas** – timbales; **Enrique Venegas** – vocals.

Ivan Cuesta, making his home in Baltimore, Maryland since 1976, has been singing and playing *vallenato* accordion music not only for the local Colombian community but has recently been reaching a wider national audience with his appearances at Wolf Trap, the Lowell, Mass., Folk Festival, New York's Carnegie Hall, and other folkloric concerts and celebrations.

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