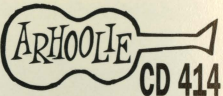


# DON SANTIAGO JIMENEZ

His First and Last Recordings



1. LA DUEÑA DE LA LLAVE  
(Ranchera)
2. LA TUNA (Vals Bajito)
3. ERES UN ENCANTO (Ranchera)
4. ANTONIA DE MIS AMORES  
(Vals Ranchera)
5. EL SATELITE (Polka)
6. AY TE DEJO EN SAN ANTONIO  
(Ranchera)
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9. VIVE FELIZ (Vals Ranchera)
10. LOS GALLINEROS (Polka)
11. ZULEMA (Redova)
12. QUE BONITO ESTE QUERER  
(Ranchera)
13. DICES PESCAO (Polka) (61729)
14. LA TUNA (Vals Bajito) (61731)
15. LA LUISITA (Polka) (61732)
16. ATOTONILCO (Polka) (62927)
17. MARFA (Polka) (62928)
18. GRAN POLKA MODERNA  
(Polka) (62932)
19. CALABAZAS A MI NEGRA  
(Polka) (62933)
20. COMADRE, TENGAME EL NIÑO  
(Vals) (62934)



21. SAL SI PUEDE (Polka) (64552)
22. VENGO A VER UNOS OJOS  
(Polka) (64553)
23. EL AGUACERO (Polka) (64554)
24. LA MADERA (Polka) (64555)
25. TENMELA HAY (Polka) (64557)

Total Playing time: 67:00

#### His Last Recordings (#1–12):

**Santiago Jimenez** – accordion and lead voice; **Leonardo “Flaco” Jimenez** – bajo sexto and second voice; **Juan Viesca** – string bass. San Antonio, 1979.

#### His First Recordings (#13–25):

**Santiago Jimenez** – accordion; with **bajo sexto** and string bass; Texas, 1937 & 1938.

Produced and edited by Chris Strachwitz  
Cover by Wayne Pope  
Cover photo by Chris Strachwitz

All selections composed by Santiago Jimenez.  
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TEJANO ROOTS

# Don Santiago Jimenez



His First & Last Recordings: 1937 & 1979







*Santiago Jimenez & sus Valedores – 1947*

*Left to right: Ismael Gonzalez; Santiago Jimenez; Lorenzo Caballero.*

## DON SANTIAGO JIMENEZ

### *His First and Last Recordings*

Don Santiago Jimenez was a musical blacksmith, forging together diverse elements of the Southwest's musical heritage. Unlike the blacksmith's bellows, the bellows Santiago worked were connected to a disarmingly simple-looking button accordion. Jimenez was one of the few musicians who could claim credit for welding together the wild, sorrowful sound of the Mexican *ranchera* with the snappy beat of the German polka. The result was *Musica Norteña*—the sound of America's borderland with Mexico. Santiago's virtuosity with the accordion seems to have been a hereditary trait in the Jimenez family. Not only has one son, Flaco, become the acknowledged king of the current army of Norteño or Conjunto accordion players and another son, Santiago Jr., is carrying on the traditional sounds of the family, but his own father, Patricio, was in

constant demand as an accordionist around the turn of the century in South Texas.

Most often Patricio's patrons were descendants of the German and Moravian immigrants whose towns have dotted South Texas since the 1840s. To keep his audience of dancers happy, Patricio became an expert at dishing up an evening's worth of polkas, mazurkas, waltzes and schotishes. Santiago, who accompanied his father to many of the dances, gained a solid foundation in this European style of music and later used it as the basis for his sound. By the late 1930s Santiago had, via records and live radio broadcasts, established his own reputation throughout South Texas. In an ironic turn of events during the late 1940s, Don Santiago's fame spread throughout the Southwest. As major record companies stopped recording regional music, smaller inde-



pendent labels, eager to expand their sales to markets outside South Texas, took up the slack. During this period Santiago scored his biggest hits, with tunes such as "Viva Seguin" and "La Piedrera" (both heard on Arhoolie/Folklyric CD/C 7024 - **The Texas-Mexican Conjunto**).

Trying to follow Santiago's success, other Conjunto accordionists copped elements of his unique personal style. As a result, Santiago was a major influence for an entire generation of musicians in the San Antonio and South Texas area. However, Santiago wasn't content to limit his style to instrumental polkas and waltzes that dated back to his father's era. His repertoire included traditional as well as original songs that fit into Musica Norteña's newer style, which combines Mexican *ranchera*-style duet singing with a one-two polka sound supplied by the button accordion. For **His Last Recordings** portion of this disc, Santiago performed almost entirely original songs which he had recently composed in

both the old and new styles. Tunes like "Las Godornises," a *mazurka*, and his earlier composition, "La Tuna," a *vals bajito*, have an unmistakable old-world sound to them. At the same time *rancheras* like "La Dueña de la Llave," "El Primer Beso," and "Ay Te Dejo En San Antonio" with their blend of singing and accordion, are more updated examples of the Norteño sound. This lilting yet punchy sound caught the ears of David Hidalgo of the East Los Angeles group, Los Lobos, who recorded their own version of "Ay Te Dejo En San Antonio" on their first major label release. Los Lobos have continued to keep this Santiago Jimenez composition in their repertoire and performed it in the Columbia Picture production of the film, **Revenge**.

Despite Santiago's widespread fame, he rarely traveled far from his native San Antonio. As a result, it was there that he developed a fiercely loyal following. During one ten-year stretch of his career Santiago played every weekend at the same club, El Gaucho,

in the heart of San Antonio's Mexican-American West Side. Almost every Saturday night Santiago held forth, and with a minimum of advertisement managed to fill the room with a standing-room-only audience of appreciative listeners and dancers.

Santiago didn't seem particularly aware of his place in the annals of America's folk music. The robust musician greeted his audience members like the old friends they were, and seemed happiest while pumping out one of his new polkas like "El Satelite." "I still have the music in me," he said. "I won't ever lose it, it just keeps coming out."

Santiago's sound was still immediately noticeable from the legions of other Norteño accordionists making the rounds at clubs and recording studios in the Southwest. One reason for this was the fact that he always used the same type of two-row button accordion he started playing in 1935. "I can play one of those three-row accordions like everybody else uses, but I still play one with two rows

because I'm more comfortable with it," Santiago explained. "It just has the right feel for me."

(Ben Tavera-King - 1980, with editing by Chris Strachwitz - 1994)

#### Editor's Note:

We have added 13 of Santiago Jimenez' **First Recordings** from 1937 and 1938 to the recordings I made in 1979, which turned out to be his last and were originally released in 1980 on Arhoolie LP/C 3013. Like most accordion players at that time, Santiago Jimenez did not sing and his music was specifically for dancing. Born in San Antonio, Tx. on April 25, 1913, Santiago Jimenez began to play accordion at age ten, learning tunes from his father and bought his first two row "squeeze box" around 1935. Within the year he was performing daily on the radio. Music store owner and talent scout Tomás Acuña listened to these programs and became the intermediary for these, Santiago's first recordings. On the first releases the label read: "El Flaco" (The Skinny



One) but subsequent records were issued as by Santiago Jimenez.

During the 1940s and early 50s Santiago Jimenez recorded extensively and played music for a living. Besides instrumental polkas like "Viva Seguin" and "La Piedrera" which became good sellers throughout the Southwest, Santiago Jimenez started to sing and compose his own songs. His composition "Margarita, Margarita" came out in the 1950s and has continued to be an evergreen to this date, recorded by innumerable artists including *bandas* in the 1990s.

During the 1970s, as the Tejano music scene changed rapidly, Santiago Jimenez lived in Dallas, Tx., and played music only occasionally. That is where Les Blank and I met him and filmed him and his son Santiago Jr. for inclusion in our award-winning documentary film on Texas-Mexican Border music entitled **Chulas Fronteras** (available on video from Arhoolie). In 1978 he returned to his home town of San Antonio where he played a steady weekly job at Jimmy's

Mexican restaurant on the city's north-east side until his death on December 18, 1984.

(Chris Strachwitz - 1994)

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#1-12: **Santiago Jimenez** – accordion and lead voice; **Leonardo "Flaco" Jimenez** – *bajo sexto* and second voice; **Juan Viesca** – string bass. Recorded in San Antonio, Texas by Chris Strachwitz on May 16, 1979 on a Nagra IV-S with two Neumann KM861 microphones.

#13-25: **Santiago Jimenez** – accordion; with probably **Jesus Via** – *bajo sexto*, and **Santiago Morales** – string bass. #13-15: February 9, 1937, Dallas, Tx.; #16-20: December 6, 1937, Dallas, Tx.; #21-25: September 20, 1938, San Antonio, Tx. (Masters 61728 & 64556 are heard on **The Accordion Pioneers** – ARH/FL CD/C 7016).

*Thanks to George Morrow of Echo Productions for restoring the sound of the old 78 rpm records (#13-25) using the NoNoise process.*

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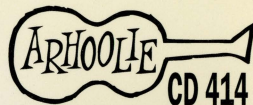
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*Don Santiago Jimenez, (left), with son Santiago Jimenez, Jr., during the filming of **Chulas Fronteras** in Dallas, Texas, May 1975. (Santiago Jimenez, Jr. can be heard on Arhoolie CD/C 317: **El Mero, Mero de San Antonio.**)*

# DON SANTIAGO JIMENEZ

## His First and Last Recordings



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*Total Playing time: 67:00*

**Santiago Jimenez** – accordion and lead voice; with (#1-12): **Leonardo “Flaco” Jimenez** – *bajo sexto* and second voice; **Juan Viesca** – string bass, Recorded in San Antonio, Texas by Chris Strachwitz on May 16, 1979. (#13–25): probably **Jesus Via** – *bajo sexto*, and **Santiago Morales** – string bass. #13–15: February 9, 1937, Dallas, Tx.; #16–20: December 6, 1937, Dallas, Tx.; #21–25: September 20, 1938, San Antonio, Tx.

Produced and edited by Chris Strachwitz

Cover by Wayne Pope

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