

What the critics say about
"Chulas Fronteras" & "Del Mero Corazón":

"TEX-MEX, MUSIC OF THE BORDER between Texas and Mexico, its history and the history of its practitioners is spotlighted on this pair of films featured on a single cassette... There is both charm and pain in the footage, struggle and joy of the people and, above all, the basic music presented here without studio sweetening and filmed on the spot in border-town clubs and backyards. The music and the people are pure. Highly interesting and valuable in history." (*John Goff-Cash Box*)

"... CHULAS FRONTERAS is absolutely the best Chicano documentary film that I have seen to date... It is our history, rescued without excuses and without romanticism but with vitality"
(Prof. Juan Rodríguez - Univ. of California/San Diego)

"A TEX-MEX MASTERPIECE." (*The Village Voice*)

"Les Blank's work is a national treasure and is worth a look almost without exception... Best of all is DEL MERO CORAZÓN in which Blank acknowledges, for once, the contradictions of contemporary simplicity. Associative yet acutely shaped, this is a movie in which the *cantina* way of life is at once celebrated and found wanting. Here homes are broken up, not just by migrant work—sometimes even by the music itself. A yearning love song belted over a UFW mural at the finale has more political power than all the slogans."

(Robert Christgau & Carola Dibbell - Video Review)

CHULAS FRONTERAS: Filmed and edited by Les Blank. Conceived, produced and sound recording by Chris Strachwitz. Assistant editing by Maureen Gosling. Consultant: Prof. Guillermo Hernández. Interpreter: Pacho Lane.

DEL MERO CORAZÓN: Filmed by Les Blank. Edited by Maureen Gosling. Produced and sound recordings by Chris Strachwitz. Consultant editor: Prof. Guillermo Hernández.

B R A Z O S F I L M S P R E S E N T S :
CHULAS FRONTERAS



& Del Mero Corazón

SOUNDTRACK RECORDINGS FROM TWO TEX-MEX CLASSICS

Chulas Fronteras & Del Mero Corazón

A: CHULAS FRONTERAS:

1. **CANCIÓN MIXTECA** (D.A.R.) (Canción) (3:25) - Ramiro Cavazos (vocal & *bajo sexto*) accompanied by Rafael Ramírez - accordion
2. **MI TEXANA** (D.A.R.) (Ranchera) (2:50) - Los Pingüinos del Norte
3. **MUCHACHOS ALEGRES** (P.D.) (Polka) (1:50) - Narciso Martínez-accordion
4. **LUZITA** (Narciso Martínez) (Mazurka) (2:00) - Narciso Martínez-accordion
5. a. **MAL HOMBRE** (arr. by Lydia Mendoza) (Canción) (3:00) - Lydia Mendoza
b. **PERO HAY QUE TRISTE** (Lydia Mendoza) (Canción) (2:15) - Lydia Mendoza
6. **CHULAS FRONTERAS** (Lalo González) (Ranchera) (4:09) - El Piporro (Lalo González) accompanied by Los Madrugadores del Valle
7. **RINCHES DE TEXAS** (Willie López) (Corrido) (2:55) - Duetto Reynosa with *conjunto*
8. **CORRIDO DE CÉSAR CHÁVEZ** (Rumel Fuentes) (Corrido) (2:40) - Los Pingüinos del Norte
9. **CHICANO** (Doug Sahm) (Canción) (3:40) - Rumel Fuentes - vocal, with Los Pingüinos del Norte
10. **LA NUEVA ZENAIIDA** (Salomé Gutiérrez) (Corrido) (3:35) - Flaco Jiménez and his *conjunto* with Fred Ojeda, second voice
11. **UN MOJADO SIN LICENCIA** (Santiago Jiménez) (Corrido Ranchera) (3:35) - Flaco Jiménez and his *conjunto* with Fred Ojeda, second voice
12. **COTULA** (Santiago Jiménez) (Polka) (1:10) - Santiago Jiménez (accordion) accompanied by Santiago Jiménez Jr. on guitar
13. **PRENDA DEL ALMA** (DAR) (Ranchera) (3:35) - Los Alegres de Terán (Eugenio Abrego - accordion, Tomás Ortiz - *bajo sexto*)
14. **VOLVER, VOLVER** (Fernando Maldonado) (Ranchera) (2:40) - Los Alegres de Terán
15. **MÉXICO AMERICANO** (Rumel Fuentes) (Corrido) (2:30) - Los Pingüinos del Norte

B: DEL MERO CORAZÓN:

16. **SEIS PIES ABAJO** (DAR) (Ranchera) (4:22) - Ricardo Mejía-vocal & *bajo sexto*; Ruben Valdez-vocal & accordion
17. **LAS QUEJAS DE ZENAIIDA** (Andrés Berlanga) (Corrido Ranchera) (2:52) - Andrés Berlanga-vocal & *bajo sexto*
18. **CAMIONCITO PASAJERO** (DAR) (Ranchera) (2:47) - Conjunto Tamaulipas (Rafael Ramírez & Toño Borrego)
19. **AL PIE DE LA TUMBA** (DAR) (Ranchera) (3:11) - Conjunto Tamaulipas
20. **EL TROQUERO** (Juan Gaytan) (Ranchera) (2:41) - Conjunto Tamaulipas
21. **EN CADA VIDA HAY UN MOMENTO** (DAR) (Ranchera) (4:29) - Leo Garza- vocal & accordion and his *conjunto*: Noe Rocha-vocal & *bajo sexto*; Fred Peña-bass; and Martín Alvarez-drums.
22. **QUIERO QUE SEPAS** (DAR) (Ranchera) (2:43) - Chavela Ortiz-vocal & accordion; Raymond Flores - *bajo sexto*
23. **BESOS Y COPAS** (DAR) (Ranchera) (3:49) - Chavela Ortiz & Brown Express
24. **LAS NUBES** (DAR) (Ranchera) (4:54) - Little Joe & La Familia

Total time: 78:08

Cover painting by Juan R. Fuentes

Edited and produced by Chris Strachwitz

Recorded on location by Chris Strachwitz (except for # 6 & 7 which are transferred from 45 rpm recordings and licensed from their producer, Willie López of McAllen, Texas)

Layout and design by Dix Bruce

Song texts transcribed and translated by Yolanda and Guillermo Hernández with additional work by Zack and Juanita Salem, Maureen Gosling, Prof. James Nicolopoulos, and Leticia Del Toro.

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Photo by Susan Tittelman

Above: Los Alegres de Terán
Right: Lydia Mendoza



“Chulas Fronteras & Del Mero Corazón”

Música Norteña

Música Norteña, usually called **Conjunto** or **Tex-Mex** music on the American side of the border, has evolved since the early 1900s into the last Mexican regional style and perhaps the most influential and uniquely Mexican-American tradition. Today, as one of the main roots of **Tejano Music**, Norteño/Conjunto is immediately recognizable by the accordion as the lead instrument accompanying traditional Mexican duet singing. In addition, the usual *conjunto norteño* also includes a *bajo sexto* (solidly built 12-string guitar), a *contra-bajo* or string bass (today usually an electric one), drums, and sometimes an alto saxophone. As it has been for almost a century, Música Norteña is still widely popular, especially among agricultural and blue collar workers.

The music represents a cultural treasure trove with its great variety of rural dances such as the polka, waltz, *redova*, *mazurka*, *buapango*, *schotish*, *cumbia*, *danzón*, etc. It also offers a huge repertoire of songs and types, ranging

from *rancheras* to boleros, to a surprising number of often powerful protest ballads (story songs), known as **Corridos** or **Tragedias**.

CHULAS FRONTERAS and **DEL MERO CORAZÓN** focus on the cultures which favor Música Norteña although it is only one of many regional musical traditions heard in south Texas and along the border. Today's **Tejano Music** embraces plenty of *grupos*, solo singers, trios, *mariachis*, *bandas*, string ensembles, as well as a great variety of orchestras, some or all of which incorporate elements of Norteño, the mother tradition.

The diatonic, button accordion, first developed and mass-produced in Germany in the middle of the 19th century, made its appearance in the Texas-Mexican border region before the turn of the century. The instrument was well distributed in the northeast of Mexico and in south Texas, due to the large influx of central Europeans in that region. The rugged little black box quickly became popular, espe-

cially with rural musicians and dancers, because of its volume, low price, portability, sturdiness, light weight, and ability to play both melody and bass. At a country dance, the lone *acordeonista*, or “squeeze box” player, soon replaced a variety of ensembles with their fiddles, flutes, guitars, mandolins, and horns. By the late 1920s, when the radio and electrical recordings were suddenly bringing voices, instrumental soloists, as well as full orchestras into homes with amazing clarity, even the “new kid on the block” was finally given a chance to make its debut before a recording microphone in a make-shift studio in a San Antonio hotel room.

“Adelita” by Roberto Rodríguez & Clemente Mendoza and “La Cucaracha” by the vocal duet of Flores y Montalvo accompanied by Jose Rodríguez on accordion (recorded in San Antonio in 1930 and 1934 respectively), are the first distinct and important Norteño or Conjunto recordings ever made (both are heard on Arhoolie/Folklyric CD 7016: Texas Mexican Border Music Vol.3: The Accordion Pioneers). The subsequent development and history of this vital, regional music is well documented in the grooves of thousands of recordings.

Why we made the films

The sounds of Mexican country music have haunted my ears and emotions ever since I came with my family to the United States from Germany in 1947. Within the year, I heard *mariachi* as well as accordion *conjunto* music over a small radio station in Santa Paula, Ca., while I was attending high school near Santa Barbara. Strangely enough XERB, broadcasting with 50,000 powerful and directional watts from Rosarito Beach, Baja California, never played Mexican music. Nevertheless XERB became my morning wake-up station and opened my ears to American country music because the station’s programming was aimed at another group of recent immigrants to California, at the time often called “Okies” and “Arkies.” Over the years I became increasingly fascinated by the rich variety of America’s regional musical traditions. During three years working as a high school teacher, I eventually turned my hobby into a fledgling business by starting Arhoolie Records in 1960.

After years of seeking out and recording many now legendary Blues, Country, Zydeco, and Cajun musicians, mainly in Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas, I took my first steps in 1970 towards documenting the Mexican-American music of the Southwest. Through Jerry Abrahams,

a recent graduate from UT Austin’s law school and at the time working for the United Farm Workers, I met Rumel Fuentes in Eagle Pass, Texas. Both Jerry and Rumel were very fond of a *conjunto* which worked the bars in Piedras Negras, Coahuila, with the cool name of Los Pingüinos Del Norte (The Penguins of the North). We promptly went across the river to hear the Pingüinos and the next afternoon I recorded them “live” at a local bar on a Magnecord reel to reel tape recorder with two microphones, the tools of my trade, which I always carried in the trunk of my car. The result was Arhoolie’s first album of Texas Mexican border music with a focus on regional *corridos*. I wasn’t especially enamored by English ballads since they seem to be sung mostly unaccompanied by a lone, deadpan voice. Here, along the U.S. – Mexican border however, ballads about brave men who stood up for what they considered to be their rights, really got to me. The wonderful sound of rural, nasal vocal duets, had already hooked me on authentic Appalachian music. A very similar duet sound in the Southwest, much closer to my home, with gutsy, staccato accordion backing, complimented by a galloping, droning 12-string guitar and a slapped bass, began to haunt me. Lack of Spanish did not prevent me from quickly becoming a

dedicated fan of Música Norteña. Already an avid record collector, mainly of Blues and Country music, I knew where to hunt for these wonderful artifacts of the culture. Seeking out some of the artists I heard on the 78 rpm records followed and I soon had the pleasure of meeting several by now legendary pioneers of Tejano music like Lydia Mendoza, Narciso Martínez, and the Chavarria brothers. No one had written books about this music as had my friends Sam Charters and Paul Oliver about the Blues. On my annual trips to Texas, I kept asking people if they knew so and so and how they felt the accordion came into this music. Certain names on records became embedded in my mind and as I talked to more and more people connected with the music and recording scene in south Texas, I created my own history in my head. I wish I had taped all those encounters with the many informants I met, but tape in those days before the cheap cassette recorder was a major expense, and I saved it for recording the music!

One day in the early 1960s, I met Les Blank, who was starting to make documentary films in Los Angeles. He introduced himself to me in San Francisco as someone interested in making a film about Lightning Hopkins. Les had heard that I knew Lightning, and was curious about

getting in touch with this fascinating Texas Blues singer. Les eventually made that film as well as several others about musicians I had been recording, including Mance Lipscomb, the Texas sharecropper and songster, and Clifton Chenier – the King of Zydeco. At the time I had no money to even consider getting involved in film projects but I was very impressed by Mr. Blank's fine work.

By the mid 1970s, as business was improving for me, I contacted Les Blank again and proposed making a film together. I convinced him of the importance of documenting the pioneers of Norteño music, offered to put up my savings, and volunteered to do the sound recordings and make all the contacts. I think Les liked the idea of filming in south Texas, a haunting and unique region, even though the music may have been of secondary interest to him at the start. On a short trip to Houston and San Benito in the winter of 1975/76 we filmed the two most important pioneer recording artists, Lydia Mendoza and Narciso Martínez. That spring we returned and met and filmed a lot of wonderful people who in turn introduced us to others. Les and I soon realized that a film about border music should not only document the pioneers but should include current musicians as well as other aspects of the music and culture. Since neither Les nor I speak

much Spanish, we hired a friend, Pacho Lane from Austin, as our interpreter. We took off for Eagle Pass where we spent several days with Rumel Fuentes, his brother De De, their friends and families and of course, Los Pingüinos del Norte. From there we went south towards McAllen where I was fortunate to be able to meet Los Alegres de Terán via their close friend, Ramiro Cavazos. Through them we were introduced to *los hermanos* Cárdenas who operated a large ranch southeast of Reynosa, in the Mexican border state of Tamaulipas. The Cárdenas brothers were not only very gracious hosts, but also played lovely old time accordion music. Unfortunately we could not find a way to include their music in the films. At the Cárdenas' ranch we filmed the remarkable scene of one of their workers on horseback desperately trying to get into the picture (and succeeding) during the sad song: "Volver, Volver" sung outdoors by Los Alegres de Terán. As the result of my constant hunt for unusual records and the advice of my friend Keith Ferguson in Austin, I became aware of the interesting ORO record label. In McAllen, Tx., we met that company's founder and producer, Willie López. Mr. López helped baptize CHULAS FRONTERAS, since it was the title of his daily radio program's theme song. This remarkable

performance had been dedicated to and recorded for Mr. López by his friend, El Piporro, a very popular entertainer along the border. Willie López also composed the powerful *corrido*, "Los Rinches de Texas" and leaves the viewer with some unforgettable reminiscences about discrimination in times gone by. I wish I could share with you all the stories behind the many scenes in these two films but that would fill a whole book and I believe the singers, musicians, friends, relatives, and the many other people we met, speak eloquently for themselves.

Once we completed the editing of CHULAS FRONTERAS I realized that the love songs, the *rancheras*, the drinking songs, "the heart and soul of *conjunto* music," as Flaco Jiménez refers to them, had been short changed and that we had filmed a lot of additional great songs which needed to be seen and heard. Several years earlier, my friend Art Walker, who operated Discos Fama, took me one night to a bar on the south side of San Jose to hear a *conjunto* consisting of a middle aged woman who sang and played the *bajo sexto*, accompanied by two very young girls on accordion and drums respectively. One of them was young Chavela on the accordion backing her mother with the help of her even younger sister on drums! By the time

we made Del Mero Corazón, Chavela Ortiz and Brown Express had become a successful regional *conjunto*. They were a wonderful example of how the tentacles of Música Norteña had reached into California and beyond. The late Chavela had by then developed into a fine singer and bandleader and was one of the few women playing the accordion professionally. I also met Joe Hernández during one of his regular and frequent tours of the West Coast, whose band at the time was known as Little Joe & La Familia. His enthusiastic support of my work and efforts to document the music of his culture, helped and convinced me to produce the second film, DEL MERO CORAZÓN. The beautiful poetry which connects many of the scenes, is, however, not heard on this sound track.

Although it has now been over 20 years since these films and recordings were made, I feel they are both timeless. Música Norteña has steadily increased in popularity but conditions for field workers have unfortunately not shown much improvement. Living conditions for the legions of workers whose back-breaking work brings us delicious produce at incredibly low prices, will not get better unless we all support the tireless efforts of the United Farm Workers - AFL/CIO.

(Chris Strachwitz - 1995)

Chulas Fronteras & Del Mero Corazón

are both available
now on one VHS
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(Brazos BF-104)

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CHULAS FRONTERAS

1. CANCIÓN MIXTECA (The Mixtec Song) (Canción) (DAR) sung by Ramiro Cavazos and Rafael Ramírez (accordion) of Conjunto Tamaulipas. Recorded at a bar near San Benito, Tx.

Note: Transcriptions from the recording are in the left hand column and translations on the right.

¡Que lejos estoy del suelo donde he nacido!
Intensa nostalgia invade mi pensamiento
Y al verme tan solo y triste
Cual hoja al viento

Quisiera llorar,
Quisiera morir de sentimiento.

¡Oh tierra del sol,
Suspiro por verte!
Ahora que lejos,
Yo vivo sin luz, sin amor.
Y al verme tan solo , etc.

How far I am from the land of my birth.
Intense nostalgia invades my soul.
As I see myself so sad and alone
Like a leaf in the wind

I just want to cry,
I just want to die from this painful loneliness.

Oh, land of the sun,
I long to see you!
Now that I'm so far away,
I live without light, without love.
As I see myself so sad, etc. . .

RAMIRO CAVAZOS is best known for being the premier voice and *bajo sexto* player for Los Donneños, one of the most popular and best loved *conjuntos* Norteños working steadily since the 1950s. Residing in McAllen, Tx. Mr. Cavazos has also been operating his own record label, RyN, and a record shop since the 1970s. He is also the composer of many *rancheras* and is accompanied here by Rafael Ramírez on accordion of Conjunto Tamaulipas, who recorded for RyN.

2. MI TEXANA (My Texas Girl) (Ranchera) (D.A.R.) sung by Los Pingüinos del Norte

Es mi tejana la mas bonita.
Otra como ella no he de encontrar.

My Texas girl is most beautiful.
There is no other one like her.

Con sus besitos me dio la vida.
Con sus miradas me hizo llorar.

Ella es mi dicha
Ella es mi anhelo.
Ella consuela mi corazón.

Tengo el orgullo de ser dueño,
De la mas bella de esta región.

Tienen sus ojos negras pestañas
Y su boquita como un rubí.
En mi memoria llevo grabados
Todos los besos que yo le dí.

En San Antonio hay muchas flores,
Que no se puede nunca escoger.
Porque al miraras son predilectas
Que Dios las hizo con su poder.

Es mi tejana de sangre española,
La que mis penas puede calmar.
Una morena de ojazos negros
Que sus amores ne he de olvidar.

LOS PINGÜINOS DEL NORTE are a typical *dueto* working along the border in northern Mexico and at the time consisted of Rubén Castillo Juárez—vocals and accordion and Hilario Gaytan Moreno—vocals and guitar with various bass players assisting. Today Rubén Castillo, leader of the *conjunto*, is still serenading daily with a new partner at many functions in Piedras Negras, Coah. Los Pingüinos have been a fixture on the streets and in the cantinas of that border town since the 1960s and have a huge repertoire of popular songs including many regional *corridos*. (Eight regional *corridos* by Los Pingüinos are heard on Arhoolie CD/C 311: Tex-Mex Conjuntos along with nine selections by Fred Zimmerle's Trio San Antonio).

Her kisses gave me life.
Her gaze brought me to tears.

She is my joy and
She is my desire.
She consoles my heart.
I am proud to have her,
The most beautiful one around.

The black lashes of her eyes
And her mouth like a ruby.
Engraved in my mind are
All the kisses I have given her.

San Antonio has so many flowers,
It's hard to decide on only one.
Because God made them beautiful
In their own way.

My Texas girl of Spanish blood,
Only she can ease my pain.
Cinnamon woman of big black eyes
Whose love I'll never forget.

3. MUCHACHOS ALEGRES (P.D.) (Polka) - Narciso Martínez

NARCISO MARTÍNEZ has been billed since his first recordings in the mid-1930s as “El Huracán Del Valle” (the hurricane of the valley) and is known as the “godfather” of Conjunto music. He was the first influential accordionist to develop what is today the Norteño style of playing the accordion. By emphasizing the melody or high notes and leaving the bass parts to his *bajo sexto* player, Narciso became a pioneer innovator and opened the way for almost all contemporary accordionists. Narciso Martínez was a very popular musician from the mid 1930s through the 60s when he somewhat retired from music. Mr. Martínez is seen in the film performing at a cantina near his home town of La Paloma, Texas, at work as a caretaker in the Brownsville Zoo, and playing for a 50th wedding anniversary. Several of his 1930s recordings are available on various Arhoolie/Folklyric releases and CD 361 (Cass 9055) is entirely devoted to his work from the 1950s when he was at the height of his popularity and recording for the regional IDEAL label.

4. LUZITA (N. Martínez) (Mazurka) - Narciso Martínez

Mazurkas are today seldom heard and are often played in a minor key.

5. a. MAL HOMBRE (Cold Hearted Man) (Canción) (arr. Lydia Mendoza) b. PERO HAY QUE TRISTE (But Oh, How Sad) (Canción) (Leonor Mendoza) both sung by Lydia Mendoza

LYDIA MENDOZA is THE pioneer female recording artist and star of the Tejano music field. One of the few women singers from south Texas to make a name for herself, Lydia's records, beginning in the 1930s with the hit “Mal hombre,” have sold widely throughout the Spanish-speaking Americas and her songs have appealed to listeners from all walks of life. The film lets you hear and see her as she sounded in the '30s (via old records and old photos) and segues to a performance in the mid-1970s at a club in Galveston, Texas. Lydia is also shown preparing the traditional hog's head tamales for her family on Christmas Eve at her home in Houston, where she today lives in retirement. 25 of Lydia's 1930s recordings are available on Arhoolie/FL 7002. “Panchita” is available on ARH/FL 7017 Orquestas de Cuerdas - The String Bands: The End of a Tradition. Some of Lydia's best recordings from the 1970s are available on ARH 3012: “La Gloria de Texas”.

“LYDIA AND THE MENDOZA FAMILY” by Chris Strachwitz and James Nicolopoulos (Arte Público Press - Houston, Tx.) is a 400 page biography of the entire family which includes many songs, skits, and personal

stories along with photos and a full discography, listing all the recordings made not only by Lydia, but by all members of the family, including María and Juanita who recorded extensively in the 1950s as Las Hermanas Mendoza. (the book is available from Arhoolie).

MAL HOMBRE

Era yo una chiquilla todavía
Cuando tú casualmente me encontraste
A merced de tus artes de mundano
De mi honra el perfume te llevaste.

Luego hiciste conmigo lo que todos,
Los que son como tú con las mujeres.
Por lo tanto no extrañes que yo ahora
En tu cara te diga lo que eres.

Mal hombre
Tan ruin es tú alma
Que no tiene nombre.
Eres un canalla.
Eres un malvado.
Eres un mal hombre.

A mi triste destino abandonada
Entablé fiera lucha con la vida.
Ella recia y cruel me torturaba.
Yo mas débil al fin caí vencida.

Tú supiste a tiempo mi derrota,
Mi espantoso calvario conociste.
Te dijeron algunos ve a salvarle
Y probando quien eres te reiste.

COLD HEARTED MAN

I was still a young girl
When, by chance, you found me,
And with your worldly charm
You took away my innocence.

It was then that you did to me
What all of your kind do to women
So don't be surprised now
If I tell you to your face what you really are

Cold-hearted man
Your soul is so vile
It has no name.
You are despicable.
You are evil.
You are a cold-hearted man.

Abandoned to a sad fate
My life became a fierce struggle
Suffering the world's harshness and cruelty
But being weaker, I was defeated.

In time you learned of my downfall,
Of my personal suffering.
Our friends asked you to help me
But you, being what you are, just laughed.

PERO HAY QUE TRISTE

Pero hay que triste
Es amar sin esperanza
De mi pecho, mi corazón latiendo

De mis ojos, una lagrima virtiendo
Y desde entonces no hay consuelo
Ni esperanza para mí

Pues si no me quieres
¿Pues para qué me miras?
O, que misterio encierra tu mirada

De mis ojos etc.

6. CHULAS FRONTERAS (Beautiful Borders) (Lalo González) sung by El Piporro (Lalo González) accompanied by Los Madrugadores del Valle

Chulas fronteras del norte, como las extraño,
no las devisaba desde hacía un año

Andandome yo paseando
por las fronteras del norte,
ay, la cosa tan hermosa,
de Tijuana a Ciudad Juárez,
de Ciudad Juárez, Laredo,
de Laredo a Matamoros,
sin olvidar a Reynosa.....

Me acuerdo la primera vez que vine a United States
of America, que no vine a pasearme, vine a pescar.
Traía yo de compañero de campaña a ese
muchacho Willie López. Le digo muchacho conste

BUT OH, HOW SAD

But oh, how sad
it is to love without hope
From my chest, my heart is beating

A tear is falling, from my eyes
And since then there is no comfort,
No hope for me

Well, if you don't love me
Well, why do you look at me?
Oh, what mystery your gaze contains

From my eyes, etc.

Beautiful borderlands of the north, how I miss you,
it's been a year since I've laid eyes on you.....

As I was travelling
around the northern borderlands,
what a beautiful thing to behold
from Tijuana to Ciudad Juárez,
from Ciudad Juárez to Laredo
from Laredo to Matamoros
and let's not forget Reynosa.....

I remember the first time I came to the United
States of America, I didn't come as a tourist, I came
to pick in the fields. I had with me as a companion
that kid Willie López. I call him kid, but because

porque no hay televisión, es mayor a mí que yo. Me traía de la mano. Pos a la semana está el trabajando le escribía a mamá: "Mamá, compré saco." Pues no hombre, un arguende que se oyó en todo el rancho: "Si vieran como anda de bien vestido, trae saco nuevo..." Nada, el saco de pisar.....

Una muchacha allí del puente
blanca flor de primavera
me miraba, me miraba
le pedí de resolviera
si a caso yo le gustaba
pero ella quería otra cosa
que la ayudara en la pasada.

Es que me vió fuerte de los brazos, ancho de espalda, amplio de pecho, ipues no me cargó de bultos hombre! Ay que mujer tan chivera, y yo de acomodado ayudándole con los velises. Al llegar a la aduana me dice el de la cachucha: "¿Qué llevas allí?...¿Qué llevas allí?" "Pues pura cosa permitida, lleva comida...." "Mentira, llevas contrabando en generos... ¿y esto?" Que bachorno, empecé a pasar aceite raza, sude y sude de pura vergüenza.....

Antes iba al otro lado
escondido de la gente,
pues pasaba de mojado.

there was no TV, he was really older than I. He took me by the hand. After a week of working, he wrote home to his mom: "I've bought myself a new coat {saco} Well you wouldn't believe all the gossip at the ranch back home. "If you could see how well dressed my son goes around...." Well in reality he bought himself a new sack {saco} for picking vegetables with.

A girl I met at the crossing
white flower of the spring
was looking and looking at me
I decided to ask her
if it was because she liked me
but she wanted something else,
That I should help her get across.

It must have been because she saw my strong arms, wide shoulders, wide chest....well she sure loaded me down with things to carry. What a charming girl, and me trying to accommodate her by carrying all of her suitcases for her. When we got to the customs official, he asked "what have you got there?" "Just things that are legal, food....." "You're lying. You've got contraband goods there.....and what's this?..." I was sure starting to sweat from the pure shame of it.

I used to sneak over to the other side
hidden away from view,
as a "wetback" as they say,

Ahora tengo mis papeles
ya estoy dentro de la ley.
tomo whiskey o tequila
hasta medio del highway.

En eso llega el sherife...un pelado que me saca más de tres metros más de alto. Una especie de Gary Cooper injertado, de Willie López, de {...}, y luego luego nos vimos cara a cara, bueno, eso de cara a cara es un decir.....lo mas que le alcancé a ver fue la evia del pantalón. Ay, animalón tostón, pero muy atento, hablandome en español. Y yo de afrendoso, afrendoso, queriendo hablar inglés hombre. Pues fue más o menos así como llevó el sherife: "Eh tú mexicano, tú eres mojado" "Wait a moment guero, wait a moment, I am working here in the piscas, in the betabel, and in the los arrozos. I gotta papers, I gotta papers...this is my picture, poco bigotón, but it's my picture." Bueno sí, pero tú estás tomando." "Because I have money, I'm with the money dancing the dog, con dinero baila el perro...echate un trago, no te vas de oquis, no vayas a hablar mal de la raza." "Oh well, otra vez será, otra vez será." "Well I'll wait for you, or you wait for me...mejor you guey..."

yo les digo a mis amigos
cuando vayan a las piscas
no se dejan engañar
con los gueros ganan lana
pero no la han de gastar
vénganse para la frontera
donde sí van a gozar.

Now I have my papers
and it's legal for me to cross.
I drink whiskey and tequila
even in the middle of the highway.

That's when the sheriff arrived...a guy that was about three meters taller than I was. Kind of a mix between a Gary Cooper, and a Willie López, or a {...}, and we squared off face to face. Well, "face to face" is only a manner of speaking, I couldn't see much higher than his belt. But he was very civil, and tried to speak to me in Spanish, and I tried to speak to him in English. Well, this is more or less what he said to me: "Hey you Mexican, you're a wetback." "Wait a moment guero, wait a moment, I am working here in the fields, in the beets, and in the rice. I gotta papers, I gotta papers...this is my picture, kind of a big moustache, but it's my picture." Well yes, but you've been drinking." "Because I have money, I'm with the money dancing the dog, with money the dog dances...have a drink, you might as well, but don't go talking bad about la raza." "Oh well, maybe another time, another time." "Well I'll wait for you, or you wait for me...better you wait..."

I tell you my friends
when you go to work in the fields
don't let anyone fool you
with the gringos you can make money
but you better not spend it there,
come back to the border
where you'll really have a good time.

7. RINCHES DE TEXAS (The Texas Rangers) (Corrido) (Willie López) sung by Ducto Reynosa

Radio announcer, composer, ex-farm worker, and record producer Willie López is seen introducing his early morning program over XEOR in Reynosa, Tamaulipas, just across the Rio Grande from McAllen, Texas. The theme song of his program, "Chulas Fronteras," (note # 6) sung by the popular Mexican star El Piporro, became the title for our film. Mr. López is also the composer of the *corrido* "Rinches de Texas" which makes some of the strongest political statements in the film. The song is followed by Mr. López' vivid recollection of being refused service in a West Texas restaurant.

Voy a cantarles, señores,
De los pobres infortunios
De algo que sucedió
El día primero de junio.

En el condado de estrella
En el merito Rio Grande
Junio de '67
Sucedió un hecho de sangre.

Es una triste verdad
De unos pobres campesinos
Que brutalmente golpearon
Esos rinches asesinos.

Decía Magdaleno Dimas,
"Yo no opusé resistencia
Rendido y bien asustado
Me golpearon sin conciencia."

Decía Benjamín Rodríguez
Sin hacer ningún extremo,
"Ya no me peguen' cobardes,

I'm going to sing
Of the sad misfortune
That occurred
On the first of June.

In the year of 'Sixty-seven
in Star County
There was blood spilled
Right by the Rio Grande.

It is sad but true
About the poor farm workers
Who were brutally assaulted
By those murdering Rangers.

Magdaleno Dimas said,
"I did not resist them.
Frightened and helpless
They beat me without conscience."

Benjamín Rodríguez said,
"Don't hit me any more, you cowards.

"Ya no me peguen' cobardes,
En el nombre del Ser Supremo."
Esos rinches maldecidos
Los mandó el gobernador
A proteger los melones
De un rico conservador.

Mr. Canalis, señores,
Es el mal gobernador
Que aborrece al mexicano
Y se burla del dolor.

Me despido, mis hermanos
Con dolor de corazón
Como buenos mexicanos
Pertenezcan a la unión.

8. CORRIDO DE CÉSAR CHÁVEZ (Ballad of César Chávez) (Rumel Fuentes) sung by Los Pingüinos del Norte

The late Rumel Fuentes, teacher, political activist, composer, and amateur musician, was our host in Eagle Pass, Tx. and introduced us to the border culture, Los Pingüinos, as well as to his brother, De De Fuentes, and to other family members and friends.

¿Que tienes tú, César Chávez?
¿Que le has dado tú a la gente
Que los que andan agachados
Ya levantaron la frente?

En sus pechos el cansancio
Ojos tristes aparentes.

Our people will win
In the name of the Supreme Being."
Those hated Rangers
Were sent by the governor
To protect the melons
Of a conservative rancher.

Mr. Connally, señores,
Is an evil ruler
Who hates the Mexican
And scorns human pain.

Farewell, my brothers,
With a heartache
I bid you be good Mexicans
And join the Union!

What's your secret, César Chávez?
What have you given your people
That those who are stooped over
Have now raised their heads?

The weariness in their breasts
Is reflected in sad eyes.

7. RINCHES DE TEXAS (The Texas Rangers) (Corrido) (Willie López) sung by Duo Reynosa

Trabajo brutal del campo
Esclaviza hasta la mente.

Hombres, niños y mujeres
Con el sol en las labores.
¿Cuánto se gana el ranchoero,
Cuánto los trabajadores?

Para enriquecer patrones
Hacer sudor en la frente.
Para hacer ricos más ricos
Se emprobrece más la gente.

No les pedimos limosna
Solo un pago mas decente.
Les exige César Chávez
Para ayudar a la gente.

Sin coraje y sin violencia
Organísen sin tardar
Pues si nosotros sembramos
Pues hay que cosechar.

9. CHICANO (Canción) (Doug Sahm) sung by Rumel Fuentes accompanied by Los Pingüinos del Norte

Chicano, soy chicano,
'Cause I'm brown and I'm proud
And I'll make it in my own way.
Some people call me third world
But I know that is the real world.
'Cause to me all I am is Mexicano.

The brutal work of the field
Enslaves even the mind.
Men, children and women
Labor beneath the sun
How much does the rancher profit,
How much do the workers get paid?

Sweat on the brow
To enrich the bosses.
For the rich to become richer
The poor must become poorer.

We do not ask for charity
Only a decent wage.
So demands César Chávez
For the benefit of the people.

Without anger or violence
Organize without delay
For if we sow the seed
There will be something to reap.

Chicano, soy chicano,
Soy cafe, tengo orgullo
Y yo se que yo la voy a hacer.
Unos me dicen del tercer mundo
Pero yo se que es el mero mundo
Porque yo lo que soy es mexicano.

Chicano, soy chicano,
All my brothers come together right now.
All across the U.S.A.
I just wake up and say Chicano, soy chicano
Right on!

(¡Andale pues!) Chicano, soy chicano,
I can fly just as high and
As long as I want to.
Some people call me violent
'Cause I'm no longer the silent
Pobrecito mexicano.

Chicano, soy chicano
Mis hermanos organísen pero ya.
Todo el mundo lo sabrá
Y este vato les dirá
Chicano, soy chicano
Dali shine!

Chicano, soy chicano
'Cause I'm brown and I'm proud
And I'll make it in my own way.
Some people call me violent
'Cause I'm no longer the silent
Pobrecito mexicano.

Chicano, soy chicano,
Soy cafe, tengo orgullo
Y yo se que yo la voy a hacer.
Unos me dicen "Hippy,"

Chicano, soy chicano,
Mis hermanos organísen, pero iya!
Por todito el país
Chicano, soy chicano,
O'rale.

(Right on!) Chicano, soy chicano,
Y me voy a levantar
Lo que quiera y como quiera
Unos me dicen violento
Porque no estoy en silencio
Yo no soy un pobrecito mexicano.

Chicano, soy chicano,
All my brothers come together right now.
All across the U.S.A.
I just woke up and say
Chicano, I'm Chicano
Dali shine!

Chicano, soy chicano,
Soy cafe, tengo orgullo
Y yo se que yo la voy a hacer.
Unos me dicen violento
Porque no estoy en silencio
Yo no soy un pobrecito mexicano.

Chicano, soy chicano
I'm brown. I'm proud
And I'll make it in my own way.
Some people call me "Hippy."

Otros me dicen caifán,
 ¡Pero yo solo sé que soy puro "Mexican"!
 (Pa' que sepan!)

Others call me a bum,
 But only I know that I'm pure Mexican!
 (Right on!)

10. LA NUEVA ZENAIDA (The New Zenaida) (Corrido) (Salomé Gutiérrez) sung by Flaco Jiménez & Fred Ojeda accompanied by their *conjunto*.

In CHULAS FRONTERAS you see four generations of the Jiménez family, all accordionists: a very young David Jiménez, his father Flaco, followed by his father Santiago and finally a photo of Patricio Jiménez, who was Santiago's father and teacher. Their music is steeped in the tradition of south Texas accordionists who have evolved their unique Tejano flavored style by borrowing from German, Italian, Bohemian, and other European settlers in the area. Flaco Jiménez was a local hero and in his prime when this film was made. He has since gained considerable recognition around the world through his collaborations with Doug Sahm, Ry Cooder, Peter Rowan, the Texas Tornados, as well as many others. Flaco's 1989 GRAMMY winning album was recorded for Arhoolie (CD/C 318) and he has many other releases on Arhoolie as well as other labels.

Salomé Gutiérrez, the composer of this song, operates the Del Bravo Record Shop and DLB Records in San Antonio and recorded Flaco Jiménez extensively along with many other local artists. Today Salomé spends most of his time with San Antonio Music Publishers representing local Tejano composers in their constant struggle to collect royalties due on their compositions. This is a humorous contemporary "answer song" to the very popular *corrido* "Zenaida" from the 1930s.

Cuatrocientos kilometros tiene
 La ciudad donde vive Zenaida
 Voy a ver si la puedo encontrar
 Para ver si me da su palabra.

It's about 400 kilometers
 To the town where Zenaida lives.
 I'm gonna look for her
 To see if she'll keep her word.

Cuado luego llegué a la estación
 "No me esperes," le dije a mi esposa
 Voy muy lejos y no pienso volver,
 Porque voy a casarme con otra.

When I got to the depot
 I told my wife not to wait for me.
 I'm going very far and I don't think I'm coming back,
 Because I'm marrying someone else.



Photo by Nelson Allen



Photo by Chris Strachwitz

Above: Flaco Jiménez (l)
 with Fred Ojeda.
 Left: Santiago Jiménez, Sr. (l)
 with Santiago Jiménez, Jr.

Presuroso llegué a San Antonio,
Pregunté por Zenaida del alma.
"Se casó, anda de luna de miel
Según dicen regresa mañana.

Como loco busqué una cantina
Pa' olvidar a la ingrata traidora
Y enseguida volví pa' mi pueblo
A pedirle perdón a mi esposa.

Al mirar una carta en la mesa
De mi pecho se escapa un suspiro
"No me esperes," decían sus palabras,
"Porque yo ya me fui con Ramiro."

Allá viene ese tren pasajero
Que sin duda me deja llorando
Me quedé sin Zenaida del alma
Y mi vieja me dejó colgando.

11. UN MOJADO SIN LICENCIA (A Wetback Without A License) (Corrido-Ranchera) (Santiago Jiménez) sung by Flaco Jiménez & Fred Ojeda accompanied by their *conjunto*.

Desde Laredo a San Antonio
Yo he venido a casarme con mi Chenchá
Y no he podido, por ser mojado.
Pues para todo me exigen mi licencia.

Se me hizo fácil comprar un carro
Para sacar a pasear a mi presencia
Y por la noche fui dar al bote
Porque no traiba ni luces ni licencia.

I hurried to San Antonio,
Asking for my beloved Zenaida.
"She got married and is now on her honeymoon
And she's supposed to be back tomorrow."

All crazy, I went looking for a bar
To forget that cheap two-timer.
Then I went back home right away
To ask my wife to forgive me.

I was shocked when all I found
Was a letter on the table.
"Don't wait for me" were her words,
"I've gone away with Ramiro."

I hear a train in the distance
And it's breaking my heart.
I lost my beloved Zenaida
And my wife left me out in the cold.

All the way from Laredo to San Antonio
I've come to marry my Chenchá.
But I haven't been able to do it because I'm a wetback
And I keep being asked for my license.

I thought I'd buy a car
To take my love for a ride
And that night I wound up in the can
Cause I didn't have any lights or a license.

Al fin de todo salí del bote
Con muchas ganas de ver a mi Chenchá.
La hallé paseando con un gabacho,
El mero jefe que arregla las licencias.

Ya me regreso para Laredo
Ya que he sufrido ya basta de vergüenzas.
Estos gabachos son abusados
Perdí mi carro y me quitaron a Chenchá.

12. COTULA (Santiago Jiménez) (Polka) - Santiago Jiménez (accordion) accompanied by Santiago Jiménez Jr. on guitar.

We filmed Flaco's father, the late Don Santiago Jiménez, in Dallas, Tx. accompanied by his younger son, Jimmy (Santiago, Jr.), playing the *bajo sexto*, who is also a fine accordionist very much in his father's style! Santiago Jiménez was billed as "El Flaco" on his first records issued in the 1930s and has continued to be a popular and influential accordionist in the San Antonio area through the 1960s, when he retired from playing dances. His playing on a two-row accordion is perhaps the oldest style still heard today. Santiago Jiménez' music is heard on Arhoolie CD/C 414 - His First and Last Recordings: 1937 & 1939.

13. PRENDA DEL ALMA (Jewel of My Soul) (Ranchera) (DAR) sung by Los Alegres de Terán.

LOS ALEGRES DE TERÁN: the late Eugenio Abrego, accordion and higher voice; Thomas Ortiz, *bajo sexto* and lower, lead voice. This *conjunto* originally from General Terán, Nuevo León, Mexico, popularized the Norteño style more than any other group by the successful blending of their voices with the lilting accordion work of Mr. Abrego and the superbly rhythmic *bajo sexto* of Mr. Ortiz. I consider this *conjunto* to be the godfather of Norteño music because they took it from the border region and popularized the music not only all over the Spanish-speaking United States but also throughout Mexico, Central and South America. Los Alegres de Terán's best

Finally I got out of the clink
Looking forward to seeing my Chenchá
I found her with a gringo,
The head boss who gives out licenses.
I'm going back to Laredo
Now that I've suffered I've enough of shame.
These gringos sure are sneaky
I lost my car and my Chenchá.

recordings were made for Falcón and Mexican Columbia, but re-issues, in typical major label fashion, have so far represented them poorly.

¿Que haré lejos de ti, prenda del alma?

¿Sin verte, sin oírte y sin hablarte

A cada instante de ti acordarme

Aunque sea un imposible nuestro amor.

¿Cómo quitar la esencia de las flores?

¿Cómo quitarle al viento la armonía?

¿Cómo negar que te amo, vida mía?

¿Cómo borrar de mi alma esta pasión?

Al ver el cruel destino nos condena

Mi bien, de qué me olvides tengo miedo

Mi corazón me dice ya no puedo

No puedo mis angustias ocultar.

¿Cómo quitar el brillo a las estrellas?

¿Cómo impedir que corre el manso río?

¿Cómo negar que sufre el pecho mío?

¿Cómo borrar de mi alma esta pasión?

14. VOLVER, VOLVER (Return, Return) (Ranchera) (Fernando Maldonado) sung by Los Alegres de Terán. This song became a huge hit as first popularized by Vicente Fernández.

Este amor apasionado

Anda todo alborotado por volver

Voy camino a la locura

Y aunque todo me tortura, se querer.

What am I to do so far away from you, my love?

Without seeing you, hearing you, or talking to you?

I shall remember you constantly,

Though our love is impossible.

How can the flowers lose their essence?

How can the breeze lose its harmony?

How can I deny my love for you?

How can this passion be erased from my soul?

To see that cruel destiny condemns us,

My love, I fear that you'll forget me.

My heart is telling me that I can no longer,

I can no longer deny anguish within.

How can the stars lose their brilliance?

How can you halt the gentle river flowing?

How can I deny the suffering in my heart?

How can I erase this passion from my soul?

This uncontrollable passion

Is forcing me to return to you.

I'm on the brink of madness

And I love you, even though it's killing me.

Nos dejamos hace tiempo

Pero se llegó el momento de perder

Tu tenías mucha razón,

Le hago caso al corazón

Y me muero por volver.

Y volver, volver, volver

A tus brazos otra vez

Llegaré hasta donde estés

Yo se perder, yo se perder

Quiero volver, volver, volver.

15. MÉXICO AMERICANO (Mexican American) (Corrido) (Rumel Fuentes) sung by Los Pingüinos del Norte.

Por mi madre yo soy Mexicano.

Por destino soy Americano,

Yo soy de la raza de oro.

Yo soy México-americano.

Yo te comprendo el inglés

También te hablo en castellano.

Yo soy de la raza noble.

Yo soy México-americano.

Zacatecas a Minnesota,

De Tijuana a Nueva York,

Dos países son mi tierra.

Los defiendo con mi honor.

Dos idiomas y dos países.

Dos culturas tengo yo.

En mi suerte tengo orgullo

Porque así lo manda Dios.

It's been a long time since we parted.

But I can no longer deny it.

You were absolutely right.

I should listen to my heart.

I'm dying to return.

Return, return, return

To your arms again.

I'll find you wherever you are

I know what losing is

I want to return, return, return.

Mexican by ancestry,

American by destiny,

I am of the golden race,

I am Mexican-American.

I know the English language

And speak Spanish too.

I am of a noble race

I am Mexican-American.

Zacatecas to Minnesota,

From Tijuana to New York,

Two countries are my home.

With honor I'll defend them.

Two languages, two countries

And two cultures I possess.

It is my luck and my pride

For it is the will of God.

Right: Rubén Castillo & Rumel Fuentes



Little Joe



Andres Berlanga

DEL MERO CORAZÓN (Straight From The Heart)

16. SEIS PIES ABAJO (Six Feet Under) (DAR) sung by Ricardo Mejia (& bajo sexto) and Rubén Valdez (& accordion).

¿Qué le buscas si ya no me quieres?

¿Qué te ganas con verme llorando?

Me arrancastes el alma en pedazos,

Y ahora en sollozos me dejas morir.

Sabes bien que me vida es tu vida,

Que la tienes rendida en tus brazos.

Si me niegas tus besos, mi cielo,

Quítame la vida, no me hagas sufrir.

¡No te vayas, mi amor, te lo ruego!

¡Que te quiero y bien lo sabe Dios!

Si tus besos, es que son ajenos,

Que venga la muerte y nos lleve a los dos.

Ay, ay, ay

Preferible estar seis pies abajo

Que saber que me éstas engañando,

Porque dentro del pecho yo siento

Que me estoy muriendo de tanto sufrir.

¿Es que nunca en la vida has sentido

En el pecho una flecha clavada?

Que la sientes que te está matando

Poquito a poquito, sin verla sangrar.

No te vayas...etc.

What do you want if you no longer love me?

What do you gain by seeing me cry?

First you tore my heart to pieces,

Then left me drowning in tears.

You know that my life belongs to you

And it is at the mercy of your embrace

If you deny me your kisses, my love,

Take my life, don't hurt me so.

Don't leave me my love, I beg you!

I love you, God knows it's true!

If your kisses belong to another,

Let death come and take us both.

Ay, ay, ay

I'd rather be six feet under

Than to know you deceive me,

Because I feel my heart

Is dying from so much pain.

Did you ever have the feeling

That an arrow was piercing your heart?

You feel it killing you slowly,

So slowly you can't see it bleed.

Don't leave me...etc.

17. LAS QUEJAS DE ZENAIIDA (Zenaida's Complaints) (Andrés Berlanga) (Ranchera) sung by Andrés Berlanga(& *bajo sexto*).

Andrés Berlanga has been a professional musician and singer most of his life. He is one of the few remaining pioneers from the 1930s and has sung with various partners. His recording career began in the 1930s and on one occasion he was at the hotel room studio the same day as the now legendary Blues singer, Robert Johnson. Mr. Berlanga sang for some years with Fred Zimmerle's Trio San Antonio with whom he is seen chatting in the film and lives today in retirement in San Antonio. This song is yet another "answer song" to "Zenaida." The original by Los Madrugadores can be heard on ARH CD/C 7019/20: Corridos y Tragedias.

Cinco meses y no muy cabales
De casada duré con Zenobio
Porque vide que no me cumplía
Las promesas que hizo de novio.

El Zenobio arregló con mis padres,
Y despues que mi mano le dieron
Me llevó pa'l estado de Texas,
Y mis padres de mí no supieron.

En un tren pasajero salimos
Tan volados parecía el demonio.
Otro día llegamos de noche
A su casa que está en San Antonio.

Veinte días pasaron volados.
¡Veinte días que fue buen marido!
Luego a poco resultó borracho,
Jugador, paseador y perdido.

"Yo pensaba que usted trabajaba
Y por eso ganaba los pesos."

I didn't last quite five months
Married to Zenobio
'Cause I saw he wasn't true
To the promises he made when courting me.

That man Zenobio and my parents agreed,
And after they gave my hand in marriage
He carried me off to the state of Texas,
And my parents never heard from me again.

We left on the passenger train,
Going as fast as the devil.
The next night we arrived
At his home in San Antonio.

Twenty days flew quickly by.
That's only how long he was true!
Then he turned out to be a drunkard,
A gambler, a no-good loafer.

"I thought you were a working man," I told him,
"And that's how you made your money."

"Que trabajen los bueyes," me dijo,
"Porque yo, la verdad, no soy de esos."

A la cárcel cayó muchas veces.
Hasta allí le llevé su comida,
Pero un día lo vide de brazo,
Platicando con una querida.

Enojada le dije a Zenobio:
"Que hacía mucho lo que haces conmigo.
Me haces menos por otras cualesquiera
Y yo he sido muy buena contigo."

Presurosa me fui pa' mi casa
A mis padres le puse un correo:
"Yo quisiera que manden por mí
Pues volver con ustedes deseo."

Les decía llorando mis penas,
Les pintaba mis cruel sufrimientos;
Cuando llega Zenobio borracho
Ahí diciéndome cosas sin cuento.

Ya me voy de este pueblo maldito
Donde quedan mis sueños dorados
Ya Zenaida se va pa' su tierra
A vivir con sus padres amados.

"Let the slobs work," he told me,
"Cause for sure I'm not one of those."

He wound up in jail all the time.
I'd even take food to him there,
Then one day I saw him holding hands
And talking with some girlfriend.

Angrily I said to Zenobio,
"You're going much too far.
You reject me for worthless women,
And I've been a good wife to you."

I went to my house right away
And sent a letter to my parents:
"Please send for me
Because I want to return home."

Crying, I told my parents,
And described my cruel hardships;
When Zenobio arrived drunk
Letting out a stream of nonsense.

I'm getting out of this rotten town;
Leaving behind my hopes and dreams.
Zenaida is on her way home,
Back to her beloved parents.

18. CAMIONCITO PASAJERO (The Little Bus) (DAR) (Ranchera) sung by Conjunto Tamaulipas

Camioncito pasajero,
si hablas, dime, por favor:
Si al venirte de aquel pueblo
Te trajistes a mi amor;
Díme donde lo dejaste
Para calmar mi dolor.

Por todita la frontera
Yo la he venido buscando
En Reynosa me dijeron:
"No andes en ella pensando
La llevan pa' Houston, Tejas
De tí se estará acordando."

Yolanda, fuistes ingrata,
Porque nunca me decías
Que te ibas para otras tierras
Y que nunca volverías
Todo el tiempo me engañaste
Diciendo que me querías.

Adiós, todo, Houston, Tejas,
Puerto bello y extranjero;
Era un "Transporte del Norte"
Aquel camión pasajero
Que se llevó a mi chatita,
No sabía cuanto la quiero.

Hey, little bus, if you talk,
Please let me know:
When you left that town
Did you bring my love with you?
Tell me where you left her off
So I can ease my pain.

All along the border
I've been looking for her.
In Reynosa they said,
"You should get her off your mind
'Cause she's on her way to Houston
I'm sure she's remembering you."

Yolanda, you sure were cruel,
You never told me
That you were leaving for another land
And that you'd never come back.
You deceived me all that time,
Saying that you loved me.

So long, Houston, Texas,
Beautiful, foreign harbor,
It was a "Transporte del Norte" bus
That little passenger bus
took my sweetheart away,
Little did I know how much I love her.

19. AL PIE DE LA TUMBA (By Your Tomb) (DAR) (Ranchera) sung by Conjunto Tamaulipas.

Me fuí al cementerio
A soltar el llanto
A ver si llorando
Te puedo olvidar;
Ahora comprendo
Que es imposible,
Porque ya ni muerta
Te dejo de amar.

Al pie de la tumba,
Mirando hacia el cielo
Quisiera escuchar tu voz
Quisiera abrazarte
Quisiera besarte
Pero no es imposible
Tu ya estás con Dios

Dormido te sueño
Despierto te miro,
Muy dentro de mi alma
Siempre vivirás
No puedo olvidarte
Yo quiero seguirte
Que me lleven lejos
Adonde tú estás.

Refrain

I went to the cemetery
To pour out my sorrow
To see if by crying
My heart could forget;
But now I can see
That it just can't be done,
For even in death
I can't stop loving you.

I sit by your tombstone,
Look up to the heavens
I wish I could hear your voice
I wish I could kiss you
I wish I could hold you
But there is no way,
You're now with God.

At night I dream of you,
By day I can see you,
You always will live
In the depths of my heart.
I just can't forget you
I wish I were with you
They might as well take me
Away where you are.

Refrain

20. EL TROQUERO

(The Truck Driver) (Juan Gaytan) (Ranchera) sung by Conjunto Tamaulipas.

Soy troquero y me gusta ser borracho
Soy parrandero y me gusta enamorar
Cargo dinero pa' gastar con mis amigos
Y en las cantinas no me gusta pantereear.

Allá en el valle toditos me conocen,
Allá en McAllen voy a gozar del amor.
En San Benito también tengo una güerita
En Santa Rosa me encontré una nueva flor.

En Corpus Cristi, Laredo, y San Antonio,
Solo se goza de la gloria y la ilusión
En California también tengo una pochita
Es la que me hace que me duela el corazón.

Sirvan los ortos de cerveza y yo las pago,
Y que me toquen una polka en el acordeón
Por Dios santito, que pa' mi la pulpa es pecho
Y esa güerita me la llevo en mi camión.

Ando borracho pero a mí me importa poco
Con esas polkas me retozo el corazón
Aunque mal paguen vivan todas las mujeres,
Brindo por ellas y aunque sea la perdición.

Soy troquero, soy un triste navegante,
Soy como el ave que se cría de flor en flor
Cargo dinero, y soy feliz con mi volante
Ni estoy engrido ni peleo por un amor.

I'm a trucker and I love to drink my liquor
I party all night long and have a ball
I get together with my friends to spend money
And in the cantinas I always play it cool.

Everybody knows me in the Valley
In McAllen I always have a fling or two
In San Benito there's a blonde who's waiting for me
In Santa Rosa I found a new flower to love.

In Corpus Christi, Laredo and San Antonio
It's heaven and you can have your heart's delight
In California there's the sweetest Chicanita
She's the one my heart is yearning for.

Play another polka for me, mister,
Serve a round and put it on my tab
By God, this is the life, I've got it made
I'm taking that blonde with me in my cab.

I'm almost wasted but tonight I couldn't care less
'Cause those polkas make my heart feel young and free
I'd like to drink a little toast to all the ladies,
Though they'll surely be my down-fall and my ruin!

I'm just a wanderer and a lonely guy
I'm like a bird that feeds from flower to flower
I've got money and I'm happy at the wheel
I'm easy going and won't fight over love.

21. EN CADA VIDA HAY UN MOMENTO

(In Everyone's Life There Is A Moment) (DAR) (Ranchera) sung by Leo Garza (accordion) and Noe Rocha (*bajo sexto*) accompanied by Fred Peña - bass, and Martín Alvarez - drums.

En cada vida hay un momento
Que no se olvida, jamás, jamás,
Y tú inocente de este cariño
Que dio la dicha, que dio adorar.

Llegaste a mi alma como lucero
Del alto cielo te vi caer
Tú me llenastes el pensamiento
De tus encantos, linda mujer.

No seas ingrata, luz de mis ojos
Que ya por siempre mi alma estará
Que ni la muerte si 'ora llegará
este momento lo arrancará.

Si puedes darme de tu cariño
Lo más pequeño que existe en ti
Una migaja, como a un mendigo,
Seré dichoso, seré feliz.

In everyone's life there is a moment
That you can never, never forget.
And you, unaware of my love
Gave me happiness and made me adore you.

You've come to me like an evening star
From high heavens I saw you fall.
My mind is carried away
By your charms, pretty woman

Don't be cruel, light of my eyes,
My soul will always be yours
And not even death, if it came right now
Could steal this moment.

If you could give me some love,
Even just a little of your love,
Like a crumb to a beggar,
I'd be lucky, I'd be happy.

22. QUIERO QUE SEPAS

(I Want You To Know) (DAR) sung by Chavela Ortiz (accordion) with Raymond Flores (*bajo sexto*).

Quiero que sepas que sigo el camino
Por donde dejaste marcados tus pasos
Ando buscando que tú me perdones
Y que si se puede otra vez me hagas caso.

I want you to know that I'm following the path
Where you left your footsteps marked,
I'm searching for your forgiveness
And, if possible, that you come back to me.

Quiero que sepas yo reconozco
Que tuve la culpa perder tus amores,
Quiero también escuchar de tus labios
Que si no hay cariño, que no haiga rencores.

Voy de vereda en vereda buscando
Aquel amorcito que supo quererme
Lo ando buscando con grandes urgencias
Antes que en el vicio yo pueda perderme.

Quiero que sepas yo reconozco (etc.)

23. BESOS Y COPAS

(Kisses And Drinks) (DAR) sung by Chavela Ortiz, accompanied by her *conjunto*, Brown Express.

Dices que tú ya no me quieres
Que el mundo y los placeres
Te importan más que yo,
Por eso desde hoy mismo te digo
Que sigas tu camino, que todo terminó.

Prefieres bailar en las cantinas,
Tomar con tus amigas
Y ahogar la decepción
Que todos los hombres que te amaron...
Y luego te dejaron herido el corazón.

Comprendo no tienes tú la culpa,
Eso es lo que resulta de la desilusión;
un hombre que tu alma no lo olvida
Que te arrastra en la vida hacia la perdición.

I want you to know that I realize
That it was my fault I lost your love,
I also want to hear you say,
If there is no more love, that there are no hard feelings.

I am searching from path to path
For that love that really cared for me,
I am searching for it desperately
Before I ruin myself for good.

I want you to know that I realize (etc.)

You say you don't love me anymore.
The world and your good times
Are all that matter to you.
So I'm telling you right now,
Go on your way, we're through.

You'd rather be dancing in the bars,
Drinking with your girlfriends
To drown the pain
Of lovers who told you they cared for you...
Then left you with a broken heart.

I know you're not really to blame,
It happens when illusions are broken;
That man your soul cannot forget
Is dragging you down toward your ruin.

Perdon que te haiga molestad
La voz de un hombre honrado
Que juró no volver;
Tus besos y copas he pagado
Ya todo ha terminado
No hay nada que perder.

24. LAS NUBES

(The Clouds) (DAR) sung by Little Joe (Hernández) and La Familia

¡Ya todo se me acabó!
¡No me puedo resistir!
Si voy a seguir sufriendo,
Mejor quisiera morir.
Yo voy vagando en el mundo
Sin saber a donde ir.

Los años que van pasando,
No me canso de esperar,
Y a veces que estoy cantando,
Mejor quisiera llorar.
¿Para que seguir sufriendo,
si nada puedo lograr?

Las nubes que van pasando
Se paran a lloviznar,
Parece que se sostienen
Cuando a mí me oyen cantar.
Cuando a mí me oyen cantar,
Se paran a lloviznar.

I'm sorry if I've bothered you
This is the voice of a sincere man
Who swore he wouldn't return;
I've paid for your kisses and drinks
Now we're through
And there's nothing left to lose.

It's all over now!
I just can't go on!
If I have to keep on suffering,
I would rather die.
I'm wandering through this world,
Not knowing where to turn.

The years are passing me by,
And I don't lose my hope,
But sometimes when I'm singing,
I would rather cry.
Why keep on suffering,
If I can't get anywhere?

The clouds that drift by
Stop and send down a drizzling rain,
But they seem to pause and listen
Whenever they hear me sing.
Whenever they hear me sing,
They send down a drizzling rain.

Parece que agran mi alma
Con sus aguas que traen del mar.

The city surrounds him closely,
The crowd seems to pass him by.
His heart's still back home in Texas
Beneath its beloved sky,
And life treats him so unkindly
He wishes that he would die.

His life has become so empty,
It's now just a broken sigh,
The one filled with pride and courage.
But all that has now subsided,
It's now just a hollow storm cloud,
Adrift in an endless sky.

Adrift in an endless sky
So lost to the world is he,
A man who has been forgotten,
Alone with his misery.
Alone with his misery
He dreams of his childhood days,
Though God made his children equal
We're different in many ways.

They seem to fill my heart with joy
With waters they bring from the sea.

Estrechamente rodeado por la ciudad,
La gente lo pasa de largo.
En su tierra tejana dejó su corazón
Bajo aquel cielo amado,
Y la vida lo trata tan cruelmente
Que mejor quisiera verse muerto.

Su vida es tan vacía,
En su suspiro leve,
Aquél lleno de orgullo y valor.
Pero todo se ha tranquilizado,
Y ya es solamente la nube de una borrasca,
A la deriva en el firmamento.

A la deriva en el firmamento
Como se encuentra perdido en este mundo,
Un hombre al que han olvidado,
Abandonado a su tristeza.
Abandonado a su tristeza.
Soñando en su niñez,
Si bien Dios creo a sus hijos iguales
Somos bastante diferentes.

Note: Due to space limitations, Corrido de Texas, from an old 78 rpm record, is heard in the film but omitted from this sound track because it is available on Corridos & Tragedias de la Frontera (Arhoolie/Folklyric CD/C 7019/20)



Above: Leo Garza

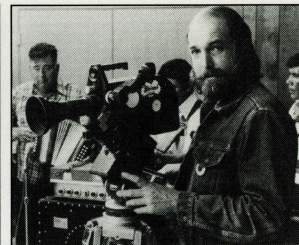


Photo by Chris Strachwitz

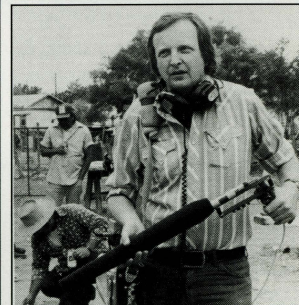


Photo by Bruce Lane

Top: Les Blank.
Bottom: Chris Strachwitz

Chulas Fronteras & Del Mero Corazón

SOUNDTRACK RECORDINGS FROM TWO TEX-MEX CLASSICS



A: CHULAS FRONTERAS:

1. CANCIÓN MIXTECA – Ramiro Cavazos & Rafael Ramírez (3:25)
2. MI TEXANA – Los Pinguinos del Norte (2:50)
3. MUCHACHOS ALEGRES – Narciso Martínez-accordion (1:50)
4. LUZITA – Narciso Martínez (2:00)
5. a. MAL HOMBRE – Lydia Mendoza (3:00)
b. PERO HAY QUE TRISTE – Lydia Mendoza (2:15)
6. CHULAS FRONTERAS – El Piporro (Lalo González) with Los Madrugadores del Valle (4:09)
7. RINCHES DE TEXAS – Ducto Reynosa with *conjunto* (2:55)
8. CORRIDO DE CÉSAR CHÁVEZ – Los Pinguinos del Norte (2:40)
9. CHICANO – Rumel Fuentes with Los Pinguinos del Norte (3:40)
10. LA NUEVA ZENAIIDA – Flaco Jiménez and his *conjunto* with Fred Ojeda (3:35)
11. UN MOJADO SIN LICENCIA – Flaco Jiménez and his *conjunto* with Fred Ojeda (3:35)
12. COTULA – Santiago Jiménez (accordion) accompanied by Santiago Jiménez Jr. on guitar (1:10)
13. PRENDA DEL ALMA – Los Alegres de Terán (3:35)
14. VOLVER, VOLVER – Los Alegres de Terán (2:40)
15. MÉXICO AMERICANO – Los Pinguinos del Norte (2:30)

B: DEL MERO CORAZÓN:

16. SEIS PIES ABAJO – Ricardo Mejia & Rubén Valdez (4:22)
17. LAS QUEJAS DE ZENAIIDA – Andrés Berlanga (2:52)
18. CAMIONCITO PASAJERO – Conjunto Tamaulipas (2:47)
19. AL PIE DE LA TUMBA – Conjunto Tamaulipas (3:11)
20. EL TROQUERO – Conjunto Tamaulipas (2:41)
21. EN CADA VIDA HAY UN MOMENTO – Leo Garza & his *conjunto*: (4:29)
22. QUIERO QUE SEPAS – Chavela Ortiz & Raymond Flores (2:43)
23. BESOS Y COPAS – Chavela Ortiz & Brown Express (3:49)
24. LAS NUBES – Little Joe & La Familia (4:54)

Total time: 78:08

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