

The Best Of FLACO JIMÉNEZ

- 1. AY TE DEJO EN SAN ANTONIO** (ranchera)
(Santiago Jiménez Sr. - Tradition Music Co. & San Antonio Music Co.) vocal duet with Toby Torres - from ARH CD 318
- 2. LA TUMBA SERA EL FINAL** (bolero)
(Francisco Vidal - San Antonio Music Co.)
vocal duet with Fred Ojeda - from ARH CD 3027
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(Leonardo Jiménez - San Antonio Music Co.)
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(Henry Zimmerle - Tradition Music Co.)
vocal duet with Henry Zimmerle - from ARH CD 370
- 7. JUAREZ** (danzon)
(PD - arr. by Leonardo Jiménez - Tradition Music Co.)
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instrumental - from ARH CD 318
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instrumental - from ARH CD 318
- 15. LAS GAVIOTAS** (ranchera)
(PD - arr. by Leonardo Jiménez - Tradition Music Co.)
vocal duet with Toby Torres - from ARH CD 318
- 16. UN MOJADO SIN LICENSIA** (corrido-ranchera) (Santiago Jiménez Sr.) vocal duet with Fred Ojeda - from ARH CD 425 - live recording made at a dance in Austin, Tx. from the sound track of the Brazos Films release of "CHULAS FRONTERAS" by Les Blank & Chris Strachwitz

LEONARDO "FLACO" JIMÉNEZ accordion and vocals with various accompaniments

Re-issue produced by Chris Strachwitz. Edited by Chris Strachwitz & Tom Diamant
Original recordings produced by Hymie Wolf (Rio Records - Arhoolie CD 370), José Morante (Norteño Records - Arhoolie CD 396), Chris Strachwitz (Arhoolie Records - CD 318), and Joey Lopez, Ry Cooder, Peter Rowan, and Chris Strachwitz (Arhoolie CDs 3027 & 425).

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The Lone Star state of Texas has given the world a lot of marvelous musicians especially in the Blues, Country, and Tejano categories. For those raised in Spanish speaking barrios or colonias of the southwest however, wider fame would seldom come unless you either sang in English, or were accepted all over Mexico. Flaco Jiménez, steeped in the marvelously rich traditions of Tejano conjunto and Norteño accordion music, has pushed those borders aside and with his charisma and talent has emerged as a cross-over star without turning his back on his roots and heritage.

Leonardo "Flaco" Jiménez, the world famous master of the conjunto accordion, a member of Los Super Seven and the Texas Tornados, who has recorded with the likes of The Rolling Stones, Dwight Yoakam, Ry Cooder, John Hiatt, Doug Sahm, Linda Ronstadt, Peter Rowan, Emmylou Harris, Los Lobos, The

Mavericks, Bryan Ferry, and others is heard here at his absolute, traditional, tex-mex, conjunto, dance till you drop, authentic, crying in your beer, best!

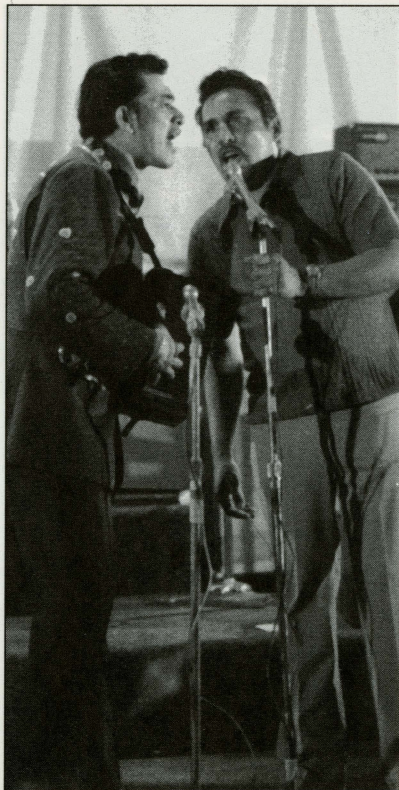
One of eight children born to Santiago and Luisa Jiménez, Leonardo was born in San Antonio, Texas on March 11, 1939 and as a young boy picked up playing the accordion from his father, who in turn had learned from his father, Patricio. Santiago Jiménez was billed as "El Flaco" (the skinny one, a nickname his son Leonardo would later be given) on the label of the first accordion instrumentals he waxed in February of 1937 when this music was strictly used for dancing (heard on Arhoolie CD 414: Don Santiago Jiménez: His First & Last Recordings).

The accordion had arrived in the Border Country during the latter part of the 19th century from Germany via Monterrey in northern Mexico. It arrived with Italian, German and Czech immigrants to Texas

and became popular by being the newest, loudest, sturdiest and most versatile instrument on the scene. Although the early accordionists in south Texas often played country dances alone with only a tambora (bass drum) as accompaniment to beat out the rhythm, small ensembles (conjuntos) were soon formed as the music became more and more popular. By the mid 1940s when the accordion was frequently added to the traditional duet vocals (which had long been popular in the region), the ideal conjunto soon consisted of an accordion (single, double, and finally triple row), a bajo sexto (heavy 12 string guitar), and a string bass (tolaloche), which by that time was mostly plucked with vigor. In northern Mexico where this genre became known as Norteño music, a conjunto would often also include an alto sax which played in close harmony with the accordion. I refer to it as the Monterrey sound!

As more and more field and ranch hands moved to the cities like San Antonio, after World War II, they wanted to hear their own "musica regional" – accordion music (now combined with





Flaco w/ Fred Ojeda

good duet singing), and their support firmly established it as the most popular music of the working class. Unfortunately, among the more class conscious Mexican-Americans, this new sound was mostly identified as low class or “cantina” music. The power of the dollar, however, eventually proved to even the most conservative record and ballroom operators that this music was taking the country by storm.

By 1956 Leonardo “Flaco” Jiménez had become quite a fast and accomplished accordionist and even a pretty good singer. He and his friend Henry Zimmerle, who played the bajo sexto and sang even better, were hired by Mike Garza for his conjunto Los Caminantes. Flaco was only 16 years old and Los Caminantes were becoming very popular, especially with the ladies who liked the more mature, handsome, Roberto Cadena who sang solo in the Mexican ranchera style. Los Caminantes were soon appearing weekly on San Antonio’s TV station KCOR-TV and over the next few years made a slew of records for Hymie Wolf’s Rio record label. (note “Negra Traicion” #6). In 1958 Flaco

decided he could make it on his own and other record companies offered him better fees and distribution. It was important for musicians who wanted to play the local dance hall circuit to have a new record out every month for the juke boxes in the cantinas, and for the slowly increasing number of radio stations which would air this music. According to local legend, Mr. Wolf never gave a free record to anyone - even the radio stations, if they wanted the record, they had to pay for it! Flaco soon began recording for the Corona label, which was also marketing his father’s music, followed by a long stint with José Morante’s Sombreo/Lira/Norteño labels. Mr. Morante, a singer himself, had a glowing personality and obviously enjoyed this business as much for the musical comraderie as for the business part. But the records were mainly sold locally in rural Texas and the wider border region.

Distribution has always been a problem for us small labels, and every town in south Texas had their own conjuntos and their own little labels. Only a few companies, like Falcon and Ideal, were available outside the south Texas area, but the artists

soon established a flourishing, if not especially financially rewarding, circuit of dance halls where they would pack in the dancers on weekends. At a time when cotton was still picked by hand, a small town like Robstown had 144 taverns and dance halls on its south and west sides! It was another ten years, however, before this music was to hit the big times, when Paulino Bernal (Arhoolie CDs 344 & 9010), Los Relampagos, and then Los Tigres Del Norte in California turned this popular border music into big business!

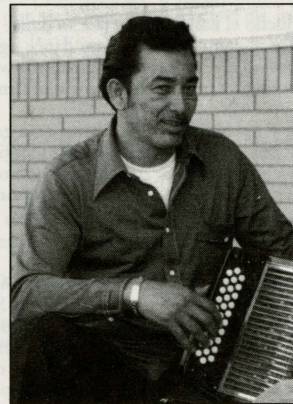
Toby Torres soon became Flaco’s second voice and bajo sexto player. They made many fine recordings for José Morante (note # 3, 4 & 12), and played many dances together. It was at one of these *bailes*, at El Camaroncito ballroom on San Antonio’s westside, that I first heard Flaco Jiménez in the early 1970s. By then Flaco was recording for Salome Gutierrez, the songwriter, label owner, singer, and recording engineer who had begun his career in 1946 in Nuevo Laredo playing bass with the first famous conjunto norteño to make records, Maya Y Cantú (note Arhoolie CD 9013) who also recorded several of Salome’s first songs. Toby

Torres, meanwhile, also started his own record label (TVT among others) and, as Flaco tried out different singers, Toby played dances with his own conjunto and operated a record shop. In 1975 I contacted Flaco Jiménez through Salome to inquire if he might be willing to appear in the documentary film that Les Blank and I were working on ("Chulas Fronteras" - Brazos Films). "Sure," was the response and we not only documented Flaco's conjunto at a dance in Austin with his fine duet singer, Fred Ojeda (note # 16), but we also visited his father Santiago Jiménez in Dallas (accompanied by his other, now well known, accordion playing son, Santiago Jiménez Jr.). With Ry Cooder along for the ride, we also filmed Flaco giving his son some lessons: thus documenting three generations of the Jiménez family. "Chulas Fronteras" was very well received not only here in the southwest, where libraries and Chicano studies classes ordered many copies, but also on the PBS TV station in Los Angeles and several TV showings in Europe where Flaco was soon a hit – especially in Holland. I thought Los Alegres De Teran would be the big hit of the film since they were THE most famous

conjunto I had the pleasure of documenting, but it seems like the Chicano audiences as well as everyone else, were really blown away by Flaco!

By the time I met Flaco, Texas pop/rock musician Doug Sahm (of Sir Douglas Quintet fame) had already made an album in 1972 with Flaco for the new crossover audience on the Atlantic label. Doug also composed one of the main songs to appear in "Chulas Fronteras": "Soy Chicano," which became an anthem of the Chicano Movement, and which had been a regional hit for Flaco. By 1979, when I finally made my first album with Flaco, he had toured with Ry Cooder who had not only taken accordion lessons from Flaco while we made "Chulas Fronteras," but who had really become very fond of Flaco's remarkable ability to play behind almost any type of music. On his home turf in San Antonio, Flaco couldn't experiment with other sounds – he really had to stick to the traditional conjunto repertoire because that is what his audience expected and wanted so that they could enjoy the evening's dance. As time went on, Flaco continued to play for his traditional audiences, but he also enjoyed his

outings with Ry Cooder and Peter Rowan where he did not have to sing that much, but rather was able to use his fine ear to accompany very different material. By the mid 1980s GRAMMYs were being awarded in an ever-increasing number of categories of American popular music and, in 1986, Flaco Jiménez won a GRAMMY in the recently introduced Mexican-American category for his Arhoolie album entitled "Ay Te Dejo En San Antonio," which I had recorded the year before at Toby Torres' recording studio. But the authentic, pure conjunto sound was still a hard sell to outsiders. The best market for Flaco's LPs was in Holland where he made a big impression. Since then Flaco has toured Europe and finally even Spain a few years ago - a country which until then had not shown much interest in Mexican-American music. Flaco has finally changed that and has made return trips on many occasions.



A few years ago Flaco got together again with Doug Sahm along with Freddie Fender and Augie Meyers to form the Texas Tornados and they toured very successfully, finally on a major record label. It was not consistently the pure traditional conjunto sound, but it opened the eyes and ears of millions of country music fans to the marvelous accordion sounds of Flaco Jiménez. A number of heavy "guest appearances" followed where Flaco's accordion can be heard to one degree or another and just recently Los Super Seven (with of course Flaco) have had a successful release. He has a new album out under his own name which is vying for another GRAMMY! Happy Birthday, Flaco – and keep on bringing us not only that happy polka beat, but the whole, rich, wonderful spectrum of Tejano conjunto music!

Chris Strachwitz - 1999

1

Ay Te Dejo En San Antonio - I'm Leaving You Here In San Antonio (Santiago Jiménez Sr.)

Ya no quiero que me beses ni besarte
ni mirarte ni siquiera oír tu voz,
porque supe que tenías otro amante,
y en Laredo ya tenías otros dos.

I don't even want to kiss you or for you to kiss me,
or to look at you or even hear your voice,
because I found out that you have another lover,
and in Laredo you already had two others.

(coro)
Te gusta mucho el baile,
y bailas al compás.
Te vas hasta Laredo y
quieres más y más.

(chorus)
You like to dance very much,
and you dance right to the beat.
You'll go all the way to Laredo and
still want more and more.

Soy ranchero, jugador y navegante,
ya me voy para nunca más volver.
Me dejastes sin dinero y sin volante,
por el mundo te me echastes a correr.

I'm a rancher, a gambler and a rambler,
and now I'm leaving and never coming back.
You left me without money and without a car,
you've taken to running 'round the world on me.

coro

chorus

Ya me voy, ay te dejo en San Antonio,
Tu manita no te la puedo quitar.
Hay momentos que parecen el demonio
cuando mueves la cintura pa' bailar.

Now I'm going, I'm leaving you here in San Antonio.
I can't take away your cheating ways,
there are times you look just like the Devil
when you move your little waist to dance.

coro

chorus

La Tumba Será El Final - The Grave Will Be The End (Francisco Vidal)

2

Luchan por separarnos, pero es inútil,
nuestro amor es tan grande, como no habrá jamás.
Juntos caminaremos hasta la muerte,
y aunque el mundo se oponga,
nos tendremos que amar.

They try to keep us apart, but it's useless,
there will never be another love like ours.
We'll be together until in death we part,
even though the world will be against it,
we must love each other.

(coro)

La tumba será el final,
allí será la separación;
y hasta en la tumba te sigo
amando si quiere Dios.

(chorus)

The grave will be the end,
there will be the separation;
and to the grave I'll follow you,
loving you, God willing.

Mienten y te aseguran que no te quiero,
solamente a mi madre la quería más que a ti.
Ella que nos bendice de allá del cielo,
me lo dijo en un sueño que serás para mí.

They lie and assure you that I don't love you,
I loved only my mother more than I love you.
She who has blessed us from heaven,
she told me, in a dream, that you would be mine.

coro

chorus



Cuando Mas Tranquila - When More Tranquil (DAR)

4

Cuando mas tranquila te halles
in ese sueño hermoso
oyelo, ruego
del quien deveras te ama

When more tranquil I find you
in that beautiful slumber
listen, I plead
from the one who really loves you

Pa' que sepas que te quiero
te dare una prueba, amada
que en el mundo no hay otro hombre
quien te quiera mas que yo

So you know that I love you
I will give you proof, my love
that there is no other man
in the world who loves you more than me

Me acerco a tus puertas
hacia a los pies de tu cama
tu dormiendo muy hufana
y yo velandote alerta

I go to your doors
to the foot of your bed
you sleeping soundly
and me carefully watching over you

Pa' que sepas que te quiero
te dare una prueba cierta
que en el mundo no hay otro hombre
quien te quiera mas que yo

So you know that I love you
I will give you solid proof
that there is no other man
in the world who loves you more than me

**FLACO
JIMÉNEZ**



Negra Traición - Black Deceit (Henry Zimmerle)

Ya no llores amigo querido
ya no llores por esa mujer
si algun día te cambia la suerte
tu te encontraras con otro querer

De rodillas te he visto llorar
de rodillas te he visto rezar
y pidiendole al cielo clemencia
que te quite de tanto pensar

Hay mujeres que tienen consciencia
hay mujeres que tienen valor
de entregarle al hombre su
cariño y le entregan de plano su amor

Pero amigo ya no le haga caso
ella es causa de tu perdición
y ha robado tu cariño la infamia
te ha jugado una negra traición

Si por ella yo sufro y le lloro
es que traigo un profundo dolor
es que siento mi pecho oprimido
por negarme su ingrata su amor

Stop crying, dear friend,
stop crying for that woman
if some day your luck will change
you will find yourself with another love

On your knees I have seen you crying
on your knees I have seen you praying
and begging the heavens for mercy
to relieve you from your thoughts

There are women who have a conscience
there are women who have courage
to deliver their affection to a man
and deliver their love at once

But friend pay no attention
she is the cause of your demise
and she has stolen your affection, the bad woman,
she has played you a black deceit

If because of her I suffer and cry
it's because I have a profound pain
it's that I feel my chest crushed
by the denial of her ungrateful love



Gritenme Piedras Del Campo - Rocks Of The Field, Shout At Me (Cuco Sanchez)

Soy como el viento que corre
alrededor de este mundo;
ando entre muchos placeres,
ando entre muchos placeres,
pero de tuyo [sic] ninguno.

Soy como el pájaro en jaula
preso y unido en tu amor;
aunque la jaula sea de oro,
aunque la jaula sea de oro,
no deja de ser prisión.

Háblenme montes y valles
grítenme piedras del campo;
como [sic] había visto en la vida
querer como estoy queriendo,
llorar como estoy llorando,
Morir como estoy muriendo.

A veces me siento un sol
y el mundo me importa nada;
luego despierto y me río,
luego despierto y me río,
soy mucho menor que nada.

En fin, soy en este mundo
como la pluma en el arie,
sin rumbo voy por la vida,
sin rumbo voy por la vida,
y de eso tú eres culpable.

Háblenme montes etc.

I'm like the wind blowing
all over the world;
Finding all kinds of pleasures,
Finding all kinds of pleasures,
But of yours none at all.
I'm like a bird in a cage,
Prisoner and chained to your love;
Even though the cage is golden,
Even though the cage is golden,
It is still a prison.

Mountains and valleys, speak to me,
Rocks of the fields, shout at me!
like I've seen in life

To love the way I'm loving,
To cry the way I'm crying,
To die the way I'm dying.

Sometimes I feel like a sun
And could care less about the world;
Then I wake up and I laugh,
Then I wake up and I laugh,
I am little less than nothing.

And so, in this world
I'm like a feather in the air;
Wandering aimlessly through life,
Wandering aimlessly through life
And you are to blame for this.

Mountains and valleys etc.



9

Un Viejo Amor - An Old Love (DAR)

Por unos ojos negros
igual que penas de amores
hace tiempo tuve anhelos
alegría y sinsabores

Al dejarlos algun día
me decían casi llorando
no te olvides vida mía
de lo que te estoy cantando

Que un viejo amor
no se olvida ni se deja
que un viejo amor
de nuestra alma si se aleja
pero nunca dice adiós un viejo amor

Ha pasado mucho tiempo
y otra vez vi aquellos ojos
me miraron con desprecio
friamente y sin enojos

A mirar ese desprecio
de ojos que por mí lloraron
pregunte si con el tiempo
sus recuerdos olvidaron

Que un viejo amor
no se olvida ni se deja
que un viejo amor
de nuestra alma si se aleja
pero nunca dice adiós un viejo amor

For some big black eyes
equal to love's grief
awhile ago I had longing,
joy and trouble

Leaving them one day
they said to me, almost crying
don't forget, my love
what I am singing to you

That an old love
isn't forgotten or left
that an old love
from our souls it may leave
but it never says goodbye

Much time has passed
and again I saw those eyes
they looked at me with scorn
coldly without anger

To see that scorn
from eyes that once cried for me
I asked if with time
their memories have been forgotten

That an old love
isn't forgotten or left
that an old love
from our souls it may leave
but it never says goodbye

Por Una Mujer Casada - Married Woman (DAR)

10

Por una mujer casada
dicen que yo he de morir
mentiras, no me hacen nada
si ella me quiere seguir.

Porque la quise y la quiero
y no la puedo olvidar,
su marido anda diciendo
que a traición me ha de matar.

Para quitarle el intento
yo me la voy a llevar
a pasar la temporada,
luego se la vuelvo a traer.

Vente prieta consentida
recelos no tengas ya,
si yo he de perder la vida
dispuesto Dios lo tendrá.

They say that a married woman
Will be the cause of my death
It's all talk, they won't do anything
If she runs away with me.

Because I loved her and love her
And can't get her off my mind,
Her husband goes around saying
He'll kill me for the deceit.

So that he won't think about it
I'll take her away with me;
for the season
Then I'll bring her back to him.

Come, dark woman, my only one,
And don't be afraid;
If I'm going to lose my life
It must be God's will.



No Seas Tonta Mujer - Don't Be Foolish Woman (Manuel C. Valdez)

12

No seas tonta mujer no seas tonta,
Que no ves la esperanza perdida,
Como las hojas del árbol caídas,
No hallaras quien te quiera después.
Ya perdí la esperanza de amarte,
De vivir yo feliz a tu lado,
Quiero vivir pero no ser desgraciado,
Desgraciado el que te ame después.

Don't be foolish woman don't be foolish
Can't you see that hope is lost,
Like leaves fallen from a tree,
You'll never find someone to love you.
I've lost the hope of loving you,
Of living happily by your side,
I want to live but not to be a wretch
Wretched be the one who loves you.

15

Las Gaviotas - The Seagulls

(arranged by Leonardo Jiménez)

Que andan haciendo esas gaviotas
que andan haciendo a la orilla del mar
andando buscando nidos de amores
nidos de amores encontraran

Si quieres, prieta, venir conmigo
en mi barquilla te llevare
y cuando estemos en la otra orilla
nuevas canciones te cantare

Ya me despido de mi morena
ya me despido sin dirección
yo te lo juro
que aunque estes lejos
nunca te cambio
por otro amor

What are those seagulls doing
what are they doing by the shore
they are looking for love nests
love nests they shall find

If you want, dark one, to come with me
in my little boat I will take you
and when we're on the other shore
new songs I will sing for you

Now I say goodbye to my dark one
I say goodbye without direction
I will promise you
that even though you are far away
I'll never exchange you
for another love



Un Mojado Sin Licensia - A Wetback Without A License

(Santiago Jiménez Sr.)

16

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 la 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 traía ni luces ni licencia.

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.

All the way from Laredo to San Antonio
I've come to marry 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.

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.

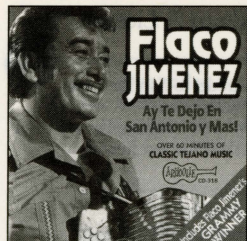
I'm going back to Laredo
Now that I've suffered, I've enough of shame.
These gringos sure are sneaky
I lost my car and my Chenchá.

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Arhoolie CD 318
AY TE DEJO EN
SAN ANTONIO Y MÁS



Arhoolie CD 396
UN MOJADO SIN LICENCIA

Also Available By Flaco Jimenez

on Arhoolie Records

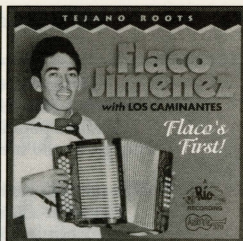
and he appears on:

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Arhoolie/Ace CD 528
TEX-MEX FIESTA



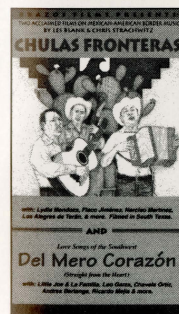
Arhoolie CD 370
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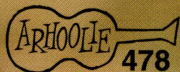
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polka, instrumental
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