

JUAN REYNOSO

- 1. Inocente Galindo** (Juan Reynoso) (*march*) (4:31) instrumental
- 2. El tecolotito** (*gusto*) (4:48) vocal duet - twin fiddles by Juan & Paul Anastasio
- 3. Son mudo** (*son*) (4:27) instrumental
- 4. Ajutchitlán** (Bardomiano Flores) (*gusto*) (5:40) vocal duet
- 5. ¿Por qué has venido?** (Luis Martínez Sarrano) (*gusto*) (7:45) solo vocal by Juan
- 6. Viva Tlapehuala** (Isaías Salmerón) (*polka*) (2:28) instrumental
- 7. El desdichado** (*gusto*) (4:30) vocal trio by Neyo, Cástulo, & Juan
- 8. El gavilán** (*son*) (5:00) vocal duet by Neyo & Juan
- 9. Amatepec** (Florencio Valentín) (*gusto*) (6:15) vocal duet by Cástulo & Juan

- 10. Muñeca sin alma** (Isaías Salmerón) (*pasodoble*) (3:40) instrumental
- 11. Tlapehuala lucido** (*gusto*) (7:05) vocal duet
- 12. Negra mala** (*danzon*) (2:50) instrumental
- 13. Coyuca de Catalán** (Eugenio Torres) (*gusto*) (5:00) vocal duet
- 14. Viva Cutzamala** (Gregorio Gómez Granados) (*pasodoble*) (5:30) instrumental
- 15. La tortolita** (Juan Bartolo Tavira) (*son*) (4:15) vocal duet

Juan Reynoso – violin & vocals
 Neyo Reynoso – vocals & guitar
 Cástulo Benitez de la Paz – vocals
 & guitar
 Javier Reynoso – guitar (1997 only)



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Genius of Mexico's Tierra Caliente

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Juan Reynoso was born under the blazing sun in Santa Domingo, Guerrero, in the heart of south-western Mexico's Tierra Caliente on June 24th, 1912. The Mexican Revolution was still raging throughout the country and Juan never had the opportunity to go to school, but from the time he was a tiny child he was enchanted by the sound of the violin. One day an orphan boy who lived with the Reynosos stole a small violin from a nearby market, and he and Juan used to fight over who would get to play it. Juan eventually won out and soon began to learn the region's repertoire. Accompanied by his father Felipe, he would carry his violin to wherever

people congregated, offering "tres por dos," or three pieces of music for two centavos. Juan soon began to spend time with the best musicians of the region, carefully learning the *sones, gustos, pasodobles* and waltzes of the Hot Lands entirely by ear.

As he grew to adulthood, Juan's musicianship and fame grew as well, and before long his group was highly sought after for weddings, christenings and parties. However, he loved to work in the fields as well, and for many years supported his large family by sowing and harvesting sorghum, sesame and corn. He now regrets not taking his music more seriously when he was younger. Juan did take a small group to Mexico City

in the late 1940s, securing steady work on radio station XEX, but in a recent interview he said that he liked nothing about city life, and, after little more than a year in the city, he returned home to Tierra Caliente.

By the early 1990s some of Juan's recordings had begun to be distributed in the United States. His international fame, however, began to grow by leaps and bounds in 1996, when he and two of his sons were invited to play and teach at The Festival of American Fiddle Tunes in Port Townsend, Washington. Here his remarkable repertoire and passionate, heartfelt playing were introduced to a new and appreciative audience. With his star rapidly rising, Juan in 1997 received Mexico's highest arts award, the National Prize in Science and Arts. In addition, the folks at the Festival of American Fiddle Tunes were sufficiently impressed by his

virtuosity that he and his group were invited to return each year. Sensing that these audiences truly appreciated the music he had devoted his life to learning, Juan's performances for the past eight years at the Fiddle Tunes festival have always been among his very best. The disc you are now listening to consists of a carefully chosen selection of the best recordings from Juan's festival appearances between 1997 and 2001. Most of these performances have never been issued before, although a few have been drawn from four Juan Reynoso CDs originally issued on the Swing Cat label (www.SwingCatEnterprises.com). We sincerely hope that you enjoy this music, the life's work of Juan Reynoso, the Genius of Mexico's Hot Lands.

- Paul Anastasio, August, 2003

~ THE SELECTIONS ~

1. INOCENTE GALINDO (Juan Reynoso) (march) (instrumental) Juan – fiddle, Javier Reynoso – guitar. Recorded in 1997. Inocente Galindo, a military leader in Tierra Caliente, was the uncle of Pedro Antunes, a violinist who used to play with *don* Juan years ago. Reynoso considered him a good friend and composed this piece in his honor. Don Juan had the opportunity to play this composition for his mentor, the great musician and composer Isaías Salmerón, and one of his proudest moments came when *don* Isaías nodded his approval at the tune's conclusion.

2. EL TECOLOTITO (*gusto*) (vocal trio) Juan – fiddle & vocals, Cástulo Benitez de la Paz – guitar & vocals, Paul Anastasio – fiddle, Neyo Reynoso – guitar & lead vocal. Recorded in 1999. Here *don* Juan and I, Paul Anastasio, play twin Calentano violins on a *gusto* about a little owl searching for a “chick.” Juan’s son Neyo sings beautifully on this piece that *don* Juan taught to one of his classes at the Festival of American Fiddle Tunes.

El Tecolotito

Si yo fuera tecolote
no me ocuparía en volar
estuviera en mi nidito
acabándome de crear.

The Owlet

If I were an owl,
I wouldn't be flying about.
I'd be in my little nest
until I was all grown up.

Yo soy el tecolotito
que vengo de Potosí.
Nomás me vengo a llevar
a una pollita de aquí.

Curucucu cu cu,
Curucucu cu cu.
Nomás me vengo a llevar
a una pollita de aquí,
a una pollita de aquí.

Yo soy el tecolotito
que vuela en la nopalera
buscando a una huilotita,
una huilota cualquiera.

Yo soy el tecolotito
que vengo de Michoacán,
en busca de una pollita
que me quiera acompañar.

Curucucu cu cu,
Curucucu cu cu.
Dame una pollita
que me quiera acompañar,
que me quiera acompañar.

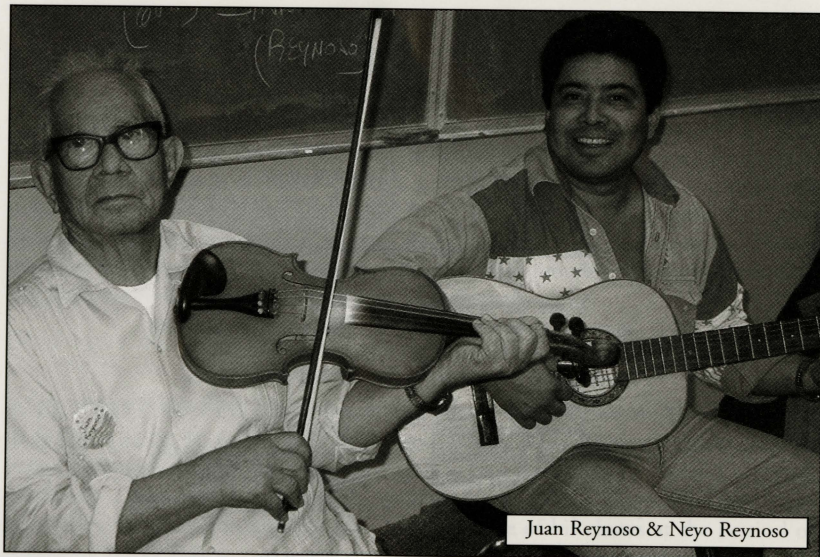
I am the little owl,
and I come from Potosí.
I've only come to carry away
a little chick from here.

Curucucu cu cu,
Curucucu cu cu.
I've only come to carry away
a little chick from here,
a little chick from here.

I am the little owl
that flies by the cactus garden,
looking for a little dove,
but any old dove will do.

I am the little owl,
and I come from Michoacán,
looking for a little chick
who wants to accompany me.

Curucucu cu cu,
Curucucu cu cu.
Give me a little chick
who wants to accompany me,
who wants to accompany me.



Juan Reynoso & Neyo Reynoso

3. SON MUÑO (*son*) (instrumental) Juan – fiddle, Neyo Reynoso – guitar. Recorded in 2001. Words were never written for many of the old *sones*. Because they were *sones mudos*, or mute *sones*, they never acquired titles. The only way that a violinist's accompanying musicians could be certain as to which *son* was to be played was for the violinist to quietly play the first few bars of the piece. While this worked out well for the musicians, it has at times made life difficult for ethnomusicologists. Fortunately, some of the *sones* have been given titles in recent years, either the names of birds or the names of people who had a special fondness for a particular *son*.

4. AJUTCHITLÁN (Bardomiano Flores) (*gusto*) (vocal trio) Juan – fiddle & vocals, Cástulo – guitar & vocals, Neyo – guitar & lead vocals. Recorded in 1999. Ajuchitlán is the Nahuatl word for Place of the Flowers, and this moody, minor *gusto* sings the praises of the small town in the state of Guerrero. Feliciano (Chano) Calderón still plays his violin there today, and in nearby La Laja lives another excellent violinist, Natividad Leandro, known as El Palillo (The Toothpick). These colorful characters can always point one in the direction of the finest mezcal, the kind that's described as being so potent that, when thrown in the air, it evaporates before it hits the ground.

Ajuchitlán Ajuchitlán
(Bardomiano Flores)

En un lugar no lejano, hay un hermoso sombrío
donde todo el ser humano pasa las aguas del río.
Lo recuerdo con afán por sus arboles frutales
pintoresco Ajuchitlán tiene grandes platanales.

Es un pétalo de rosa que despidе sus olores,
es de sonrisa graciosa, la tierra de mis amores.

Es un pétalo de rosa que despidе sus olores
es de sonrisa graciosa, la tierra de mis amores.

Ajuchitlán memorable, ilusión embriagadora
paisajito inolvidable, tienes el brillo
de aurora.

Tienes hombres ilustrados, adorada tierra mía,
tus hijos engalanados formarán un nuevo día.

Es un pétalo de rosa que despidе sus olores
es de sonrisa graciosa, la tierra de mis amores.

Es un pétalo de rosa que despidе sus olores
es de sonrisa graciosa, la tierra de mis amores.

In a beautiful shady place not far away
where everyone crosses the river.
I fondly remember it because of its fruit trees:
picturesque Ajuchitlán has large banana groves.

You are a rose petal that perfumes the air,
you are a land of gracious smiles, the land of my heart.

You are a rose petal that perfumes the air,
you are a land of gracious smiles, the land of my heart.

Memorable Ajuchitlán, intoxicating illusion,
unforgettable landscape, you have the radiance
of the aurora.

My adored land, you have illustrious men.
Your distinguished children will create a bright future.

You are a rose petal that perfumes the air,
you are a land of gracious smiles, the land of my heart.

You are a rose petal that perfumes the air,
you are a land of gracious smiles, the land of my heart.

5. ¿POR QUÉ HAS VENIDO? (Luis Martínez Sarrano) (*gusto*) (solo vocal) Juan – fiddle & solo vocals, Cástulo – guitar. Recorded in 1999. A powerful, minor mood piece. Juan slithers and slides around his violin, wringing every last bit of juice from the melody. He sings with the passion of one who has lived life to the fullest, and has “29 or 31 ... I don’t remember” children to prove it. Not originally a *gusto*, but a very popular Yucatecan-style song written by Luis Martínez Serrano, (author of ¿Donde esta corazón?), about 1928.

¿Por qué has venido? Why Have You Come?

(Luis Martínez Serrano)

Si supieras lo mucho que yo he sufrido
si pudieras saber lo que he llorado,
nunca mas volverías de nuevo al nido
que una vez ya dejaste abandonado.
(X2)

If you had known how much I have suffered,
if you had known the tears I have cried,
you would never have returned to the nest,
the nest that you had once abandoned.
(X2)

He llorado en silencio cual llora un niño,
el día en que dejaste tu hogar querido.
Todo se ha muerto junto con mi cariño,
mis dulces sueños de oro desvanecidos.
(X2)

I have cried in silence as a child cries,
the day that you left your beloved home,
everything there has died, even my tenderness,
my sweet golden dreams have also fled.
(X2)

He sufrido tu ausencia intensamente
que jamás te creí tan ruin y falsa.
Solitario he sufrido amargamente,
evocando los besos que tu me dabas.
(X2)

I have suffered your absence intensely,
I never believed you could be so cruel and heartless.
Alone I have suffered bitterly,
remembering the kisses that you once gave me.
(X2)

Besos que en un tiempo daban placer y dicha,
besos que conseguían borrar resabios,

Kisses that once gave me such pleasure and fortune,
kisses that once knowingly erased all pain,

tómanse veneno por mi desdicha
y por besarlos loco mordí mis labios.

drink poison to my misfortune,
and not able to kiss them, crazily, I bit my lips.

Vuelves arrepentida de nuevo al nido,
pero tanto he luchado por olvidarte
que tras mucho pedirlo logré el olvido,
de mi mente por siempre pude alejarte.

Repentant, you have returned again to the nest,
but I have fought so hard to forget you,
that after much asking I have learned to forget:
I have forever banished you from my thoughts.

No te acuerdes jamás de aquellas horas
ni recuerdes que un día te he querido.
Me da pena mirarte, dí por qué lloras,
vete ya por piedad, ¿por qué has venido?
(X2)

Never remember again those sunny hours,
and never remember that once I loved you.
It gives me shame to look at you. Why are you crying?
For pity's sake, please go. Why did you come back?
(X2)

6. VIVA TLAPEHUALA (Isaías Salmerón) (polka) (instrumental) Juan – fiddle, Neyo – guitar, Javier – guitar. Recorded in 1997. This polka became *don Juan's rubrica* or theme song when he was on the radio in Mexico City and he still often starts and ends his performances with an abbreviated version. Here Juan plays the piece in its entirety, including all four sections.

7. EL DESDICADO (*gusto*) (vocal trio) Juan – fiddle & vocals, Cástulo – guitar & vocals, Neyo – guitar & lead vocals. Recorded in 1999. Calentana music seems to have a disproportionate number of aching beautiful melodies, and this is without a doubt one of them. Here we can enjoy the honeyed voice of Neyo Reynoso singing the melody. Cástulo Benitez de la Paz, Juan's long time friend and accompanist, sings harmony, with Juan filling in the third vocal part as needed. Neyo for many years has led a more modern musical group playing the popular *banda* style but he has never forgotten the old songs.

El Desdichado**Poor Wretch**

Dices que soy desdichado
eso no lo sabía yo,
has de venir a mi lado
aunque me digas que no.
(X2)

You say that I'm no good,
I wasn't aware of that.
You're going to come with me,
even though you tell me no.
(X2)

¿Por qué no me das tu amor,
para que tanta grandeza?
al cabo al mejor licor
se le va la fortaleza.
(X2)

Why don't you give me your love,
why are you so high and mighty?
After all, even the best liquor
loses its strength
(X2)

No te muestres orgullosa
porque te ofrezco mi amor.
Y si te veo cariñosa
yo te amaré con fervor.
(X2)

Don't be so proud,
because I am offering you my love.
If you open up to me
I'll love you with all my heart.
(X2)

¿Por qué no me das tu amor,
para que tanta grandeza?
Al cabo al mejor licor
se le va la fortaleza.
(X2)

Why don't you give me your love,
why are you so high and mighty?
Even the best liquor
loses its strength.
(X2)

8. EL GAVILÁN (*son*) (vocal duet) Juan – fiddle & vocals, Cástulo guitar, Neyo – guitar & lead vocals. Recorded in 1999. Although many of the *sones* of Tierra Caliente are purely instrumentals, this *son* has words. Juan's *son* Neyo sings the lead part, with Juan singing harmony. Between the verses Juan plays what are called *adornos*, or

adornments – short, pre-arranged musical decorations. Juan's accompanists are never sure which of the hundreds of *adornos* from his repertoire he might play at any given time, and they must listen carefully and sometimes scramble to hit the correct chords that fit a given *adorno*.

El Gavilán**The Hawk**

Un gavilán se levanta un pichón que está dormido,
un gavilán se levanta un pichón que está dormido.
Todo el palomar se espanta y queda despavorido.
Todo el palomar se espanta y queda despavorido.

Si na na na na na, si na na na na.....

Cuando este jilguero canta,
no hay calandria que haga nido.

Tengo una mata de té que todos los días la riego
tengo una mata de té que todos los días la riego.

Se me hace que con usted derecho me voy al cielo.

Se me hace que con usted derecho me voy al cielo.

Si na na na na na, si na na na na.....

Quien sabe si llegaré, nomás este riesgo llevo.

A hawk swoops down and carries off a sleeping dove,
A hawk swoops down and carries off a sleeping dove.
The whole dove's nest is scared and remains terrified.
The whole dove's nest is scared and remains terrified.
Si na na na na na, si na na na na.....
When this goldfinch sings his song
all larks stop their nest building.

I have a tea plant that I water every day.
I have a tea plant that I water every day.
I think that with you I'll go directly to heaven.
I think that with you I'll go directly to heaven.
Si na na na na na, si na na na na.....
Who knows if I'll get there, that's the risk I take.

9. AMATEPEC (Florencio Valentín) (*gusto*) (vocal duet) Juan – fiddle & vocals, Cástulo – guitar & lead vocals. Recorded in 1999. Another powerful and hauntingly beautiful melody. On this selection Cástulo Benitez de la Paz sings the melody while Juan sings a low harmony. Between verses Juan's choice of *adornos*, the musical shapes that fill the spaces between verses, is especially apt. Starting low and slow, he moves plaintively to the higher range, telling a real musical story through his choice of these floating ornaments.

10. MUÑECA SIN ALMA (Isaías Salmerón) (*pasodoble*) (instrumental) Juan – fiddle, Neyo – guitar, Javier – guitar. Recorded in 1997. This title translates to “Doll Without A Soul”. The subject of the song may not have a soul, but this *pasodoble* has plenty, especially when played by *don* Juan and his sons. This fine composition begins with a distinctive Spanish-sounding fanfare, and then moves through the capricious moods of various minor and major sections. Note an ear catching hint of Tierra Caliente style boogie-woogie partway through the piece. In live performance this phrase never fails to turn all the heads in the direction of the maestro.

11. TLAPEHUALA LUCIDO (*gusto*) (vocal trio) Juan – fiddle & vocals, Cástulo – guitar & lead vocals, Neyo – guitar & vocals. Recorded in 1999. Tlapehuala, Guerrero, is a small town on the shore of the Rio Balsas. Although small in size, it looms large in the history of Calentana music. One of the region’s finest composers and violinists, Isaías Salmerón, lived there. When he was young, Juan Reynoso “cut his teeth” backing Isaías on the *guitarra panzona* or “belly guitar,” a small fretless instrument with gut strings. Today Isaías’ nephew, Zacherias Salmerón, who also lives in Tlapehuala, continues to play the violin in the style he learned from his illustrious uncle.

12. NEGRA MALA (*danzón*) (instrumental) Juan – fiddle, Javier – guitar. Recorded in 2000. Don Juan doesn’t know who composed this stately, mysterious *danzón*, but he recalls learning it over fifty years ago from Isaías Salmerón. The prowling, panther-like minor-key opening sections, give way like clouds after a rainfall to reveal a sunny, singing melody in a contrasting major key.

13. COYUCA DE CATALÁN (Eugenio Torres) (*gusto*) (vocal duet) Juan – fiddle & vocals, Cástulo – guitar & lead vocals. Recorded in 1999. This *gusto* celebrates the beauties of Coyuca de Catalán, an old town on the banks of Rio Balsas in Guerrero. The *gusto*, along with the *son*, are the two 6/8 musical genres most often associated with Tierra Caliente, and they serve as musical accompaniment for showcase dancing. In fact, the men of the Hot Lands even teach their horses to dance to this music, a feat that must be seen to be believed.

14. VIVA CUTZAMALA (Gregorio Gómez Granados) (*pasodoble*) (instrumental) Juan – fiddle, Cástulo – guitar, Neyo – guitar. Recorded in 1999. There are many pieces written in tribute to Tierra Caliente’s towns, and this one, with its three-against-two rhythm and guitar countermelodies, is one of the best. As arranged by Juan and myself for a string quintet consisting of three violins, cello and bass, it was featured at Lindajoy Fenley’s sixth Encuentro de Dos Tradiciones (Encounter of Two Traditions) festival with Juan himself playing first violin. Although *don* Juan does not read or write music, his repertoire and knowledge of harmony are encyclopedic, and to date I have transcribed 500 pieces from his repertoire and 200 of his arrangements for three violins in harmony.

15. LA TORTOLITA (Juan Bartolo Tavira) (*son*) (vocal duet) Juan – fiddle & vocals, Cástulo – guitar & lead vocals, Neyo – guitar. Recorded in 1999. Juan Bartolo Tavira is without a doubt the “grand old man” of Calentana music. It is safe to say that the music of Tierra Caliente as it is played today would not exist but for this man’s genius. As harpist, bandleader and composer, he set the style for the music of the Hot Lands, and his influence is still keenly felt today, over a century and a half since his birth. Tortolita is the name of a small field bird, and this aptly named piece swoops and glides like a bird in flight.

La Tortolita The Turtledove

(Juan Bartolo Tavira)

¿Tortolita de donde vienes? Turtledove, where are you from?
Tortolita de donde vienes? Turtledove, where are you from?
Despavorida y mortal Frightened and mortal
Despavorida y mortal Frightened and mortal
Tortolita de donde vienes? Turtledove, where are you from?

Señora del campo vengo, Señora I am from the country,
Señora del campo vengo, Señora I am from the country,
de huida del gavilán, I have escaped from the hawk,
de huida del gavilán, I have escaped from the hawk.

Chole cholita la vida mía, Listen my dear pretty one:
vamos a misa a la Cofradía we're going to Mass, to the Brotherhood,
yo quisiera que juntaras I would like you to press
tu boquita con la mía, your lips to mine,
para que así me besaras so that you would kiss me,
boquita de Alejandría sweet mouth of Alexandria.

Tan Tan, que tocan la puerta Tan Tan, Someone's at the door.
Tan Tan, que la voy a abrir Tan Tan, I'll open the door.
Tan Tan, aquí estoy alerta Tan Tan, I'm here awake.
Tan Tan, déjame dormir. Tan Tan, Let me get some sleep.

Tortolita por qué lloras, Turtledove why are you crying?
Tortolita por qué lloras, Turtledove why are you crying?
dime quién se te murió, Tell me who has died.
dime quién se te murió, Tell me who has died.
Tortolita por qué lloras? Turtledove why are you crying?

Si se murió tu marido, If it's your husband who has died,
si se murió tu marido, If it's your husband who has died,
no llores, que aquí estoy yo, Don't cry, I am here for you.
no llores que aquí estoy yo, Don't cry, I am here for you.

Chole cholita la vida mía, Listen my dear pretty one:
vamos a misa a la Cofradía we're going to Mass, to the Brotherhood.
yo quisiera que juntaras I would like you to press
tu boquita con la mía, your lips to mine,
para que así me besaras so that you would kiss me,
boquita de Alejandría sweet mouth of Alexandria.

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The recordings were made at the Festival of American Fiddle Tunes which has been presented by Centrum in Port Townsend, Washington every year since 1977 with the purpose of creating opportunities for participants to be in community with the bearers of North American fiddle traditions. For details contact: CENTRUM – P.O. Box 1158, Port Townsend, WA 98368-0958 – www.centrum.org

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Cover photo by John A. Gallagher
Graphic design by Morgan Dodge

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