

GRUPO

Mono Blanco

"Soneros Jarocho"

1. **El Buscapies** (The Firecracker)
2. **El Colas** (Nicholas)
3. **El Cascabel** (The Rattle)
4. **El Balaju** (The Ballyhoo) (harp solo)
5. **El Palomo Y La Paloma**
(The Male & Female Dove)
6. **La Morena** (The Dark Skinned Girl)
7. **La Bamba**
8. **El Perro** (The Dog)
9. **El Zapateado** (The Clog Dance)

Andres Alfonso Vergara – harp & voice
 Andres Vega Delfin – guitarra de son
 & voice
 Gilberto Gutierrez Silva – jarana
 tercera, pandero, zapateado & voice
 Patricio Hidalgo Belli – jarana segunda
 & voice
 with Willie Ludwig – quijada

Produced by Chris Strachwitz &
 Grupo Mono Blanco

#s 1, 6, 7, 8, & 9: recorded by Chris Strachwitz
 with one Neumann stereo mic in El Cerrito,
 CA in 1989. #s 2, 3, 4, & 5: supervised by
 Francisco Gonzalez and recorded at Mabarak
 Studios in Veracruz, Ver. (Mexico) in 1990.

Cover photo by Silvia Gonzales De Leon;
 (l to r) Andres Alfonso, Gilberto Gutierrez,
 Patricio Hidalgo, & Andres Vega

Edited by Eugene Rodriguez
 All selections PD and arranged by Grupo Mono
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The Arhoolie Recordings 1989-1990



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(left to right) Patricio Hidalgo, Gilberto Gutierrez, Andres Alfonso, & Andres Vega

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GRUPO MONO BLANCO’S
“Soneros Jarochos, the Arhoolie Recordings 1989-1990” is son Jarcho is at its best – authentic musicians, steeped in the tradition, conversing in their vernacular language, exchanging musical ideas, rhythms and verses, with hearty rural drive and excellent musical taste. These four musicians, who represent different generations, are unified by their passion for playing music for the sake of the music.

This recording represents the gold standard for those interested to know the son Jarcho.

The son Jarcho is from Southern Veracruz, Mexico, a region rich in cultural influences that include Spanish Baroque, flamenco, West African, Indigenous, and Afro Caribbean elements. It is important to note that the son is not a song. A song has a fixed melody and lyrics and is defined by its form. A son is based on a

repeating rhythmic and harmonic pattern with an infinite number of melodies and verses – depending on the creativity of the interpreter. A musician adept at improvising within this genre is a sonero. The casual listener may hear only primary chord progressions and think that this is a simple music, but the more careful ear hears the simultaneous improvisation revealing layers of passing harmonies, melodies and figuras (arpeggiated lines) that create a rich tapestry of musical ideas. The depth of an expression is limited only by the skill of the musicians playing and the moment of creation.

Modernization and the shift of the Mexican economy away from a rural base diminished the popularity of the son in the latter 20th Century. At the same time, the son Jarocho became heavily commer-

cialized due to the international popularity of sones like “La Bamba.” This commercialization created an increased standardization of the music and de-emphasized the art of improvisation.

The traditional practice of the son was also affected heavily by the decline of the fandango Jarocho – the fiesta where sones were traditionally played and danced. The fandango is an open-ended jam session that could last for hours or days. The near extinction of the fandango not only robbed the community of a time-honored forum for self and community expression, it also undercut the creative source of the music.

In the late 1970’s Grupo Mono Blanco was formed by a young Gilberto Gutierrez to revive the old style of playing. Mono Blanco began as a group but quickly devel-

oped into the musical core of a cultural movement. They worked to revive the fandango by setting up workshops in traditional instrument building (made from solid pieces of wood rather than like guitars), verse composition, instrument technique and trained a new generation of musicians by nurturing the traditional manner of cultural transmission. What occurred was not only the revival of a tradition but a renaissance of creativity by young and old alike. Today the son Jarocho is essentially a music played by young people with an enormous number of groups playing in Mexico as well as the U.S.

This live Arhoolie recording documents a moment in the trajectory of Mono Blanco from 1989- 1990. The group of four recorded here includes Andres Alfonso, Andres Vega, Gilberto Gutierrez and

Patricio Hidalgo. Andres Alfonso was born into a family of fishermen in the picturesque pueblo of Tlacotalpan. Musical talent ran deep in his family and he took to the harp quickly and easily. His style of playing the harp and pandero well represents that of Tlacotalpan. There are few recordings of Don Andres and this recording represents some of his best musical moments before he was diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease. Andres Vega plays guitarra de son also known as requinto Jarocho. Andres Vega also learned music within his family. His style represents a more rural approach than that of his tocayo Andres Alfonso. He grew up in El Lirio Municipio de Salta Barranca. His father Mario Vega was also great requintero. All of Don Andres Vega’s nine children play and dance the son as do many

of his grandchildren. Founder Gilberto Gutierrez plays jarana, pandero and dances the percussive zapateado. Gilberto Gutierrez was born into a musical family in the small pueblo of Tres Zapotes. He moved to Mexico City at the age of 15 and returned to study the traditional son Jarocho with the legendary Arcadio Hidalgo with whom he founded Grupo Mono Blanco. Patricio Hidalgo, a grandson of Arcadio Hidalgo, plays jarana, percussion and sings on this recording. Patricio is part of the revival generation and like other members of Mono Blanco moved on to form his own Jarocho groups after he left the group.

Soneros Jarochos was recorded during and after Mono Blanco's first tour to Northern California, a time when they were first establishing an international component to

the new jaranero movement thanks to their Californian friend Willie Ludwig who introduced Mono Blanco to Chris Strachwitz, President of Arhoolie Records. At that time they began creating musical disciples in California, among them Los Cenzontles of San Pablo, CA, with whom Mono Blanco has collaborated on numerous projects throughout the years.

In retrospect, witnessing the current popularity of the fandango Jarocho and the many new creative groups emerging in Veracruz and California, Soneros Jarochos, the Arhoolie Recordings 1989-1990 assumes even more significance and artistic value. It is a unique artistic treasure and serves as a pillar of excellence for generations of soneros to come.

— *Eugene Rodriguez*

Producer's note:

The texts of these sones are highly metaphoric, often double or multi entendre and open to various interpretations to say the least!

The following texts were transcribed and translated by Eugene Rodriguez with assistance from members of Mono Blanco with additional help from Antonio Cuellar and Prof. James Nicolopolulos.

For related viewing we suggest the DVD entitled FANDANGO – Searching for the White Monkey (Buscando Al

Mono Blanco); A 65 minute documentary by Ricardo Braojos & Eugene Rodriguez with English and Spanish subtitles.

It features regional Veracruz musicians, members of Grupo Mono Blanco, Los Cenzontles, and other fandangueros and was filmed in Veracruz and California. Available from Los Cenzontles Mexican Arts Center, a 501c 3 non profit organization located at 13108 San Pablo Ave. – El Cerrito, CA 94805 and at www.loscenzontles.com.

I. EL BUSCAPIÉS

¿Señores que son es este?
Señor es el buscapiés
La primera vez que lo oigo
Pero que bonito es.

Gentlemen, what son is this?
Sir, the Buscapiés
It's the first time I hear it
And it's so beautiful.

Que daño me hace el rocío
Y la humedad del terreno
Cuando yo tendré lo mío
Para no desear lo ajeno.

What harm the dew does to me
And the humidity of this land
When I have my own
I won't desire another's.

Trigueñita te hizo el cielo
Para mi condenación
Con ese color moreno
Me robaste el Corazón.

Sweetheart, heaven made you
To punish me
With your dark skin
You stole my heart.

Si oyes tocar agonía
Por mi no te pongas triste
Al cabo no me quisiste
Como yo a ti te quería.

No me entierren en lo oscuro
Como si fuera un traidor
Yo soy bueno y como bueno
Moriré de cara al sol.

Recuerda cuando pusiste
Tu mano sobre la mía
Y llorando me dijiste
Que nunca me olvidarías
Fue lo primero que hiciste.

Jovencita te hizo el cielo
Para mi condenación
Delgadita de cintura
Y alegre de corazón.

Yo pretendí una mujer
Que venía de su destino
Tanto me llegó a querer
Que pronto le di camino
Por que me quería tener
Como plátano en racimo.

Recuerdo muy anhelante
Ese rato donde a solas
Estuvimos con mi amante
Retozando con las olas.

If you hear suffering
Don't be sad for me
From the beginning you never loved me
As I loved you.

Don't bury me in the dark
As if I were a traitor
I am good, and as a good person
I will die in the light of the sun.

Do you remember when you
Put your hand on mine?
And you told me, crying
That you would never forget me
But that was the first thing you did.

Young lady, heaven made you
To punish me
With your thin waist
And a joyful heart.

I pursued a woman
Who came with a past
She came to love me so much
That I soon sent her on her way
Because she wanted me
As just another a banana in a bunch.

I remember with longing
That time when my lover and I
Were alone together,
Rocking with the waves.

Por ser la primera vez
Que yo en esta casa canto
Gloria al padre Gloria al hijo
Gloria al Espíritu Santo.

Ave María que ave ave
De tan alta jerarquía
Ave María Dios te salve
Que Dios te salve María.

Adiós negrita me voy
Tu amor será de quien quieras
Estos suspiros que doy
Para que veas de de veras
Que tu fiel amante yo soy
Aunque tu a mi no me quieras.

Mi verso es como un puñal
Que por el puño hecha flor
Mi verso es un surtidor
Que da un agua de coral.

Morenita no me encierres
por que me gusta el borlote
Se va Gilberto Gutiérrez
Del pueblo de Tres Zapotes.

Al fin Vega ya se va
Solo siente el despedirse
Mas les dice en realidad
Que si pudiera partirse
Les dejaría la mitad
Y la otra mitad pa irse.

Being the first time
That I sing in this house
Glory to the Father, Son
And the Holy Ghost.

Hail Mary, hail! hail!
Of such grand hierarchy,
Hail Mary, may God save you
May God save you!

Goodbye, darling, I am leaving
Your love will go to another
These sighs of mine
Are so that you see in truth
That I am your faithful love
Although you don't love me.

My verse is like a dagger
That in my fist makes a flower;
My verse is like a fountain
That flows coral water.

Darling don't shut me in
Because I the rough mob.
Gilberto Gutiérrez is leaving
The town of Tres Zapotes.

At last, Vega is leaving
Because he must,
In truth he will tell you
That if he could split himself
Half would stay,
And the other half would leave.

3. EL CASCABEL (THE RATTLE)

Si mi cascabel sonara
Nada quisiera por el
Pero como ya no suena
Yo lo quisiera vender.

Ay como resuma y suena
Resumba y va resumbando
Resumba y va resumbando
Mi cascabel en la arena.

Ay solita y soledad
Soledad llevame a ver
A la que yo bien quería
Y me dejó de querer
Si todavía me quisiera
La volvería yo a querer.

Yo tenía mi cascabel
Con una cinta morada
y como era de oropel
Se lo di a mi prenda amada
Para que juegue con el
Allá por la madrugada.

Ay solita ay soledad
Soledad que así decía
De noche te vengo a ver
Por que no puedo en el día
Y si pudiera viniera
A todas horas del día.

If my rattle sounded
I would want nothing for it
But as it makes no sound
I would like to sell it.

Oh, how it resonates
Resonates and sounds
Resonates and sounds
My rattle in the sand.

All alone, oh, the loneliness
Solitude take me to see
To see the one that I love so well
And who stopped loving me
If she still loved me,
I would love her again.

I had my rattle
With a purple ribbon
And because it was made of tinsel
I gave it to my love
So she could play with it
There at dawn.

All alone, oh, the loneliness
Loneliness was saying:
"I visit you at night
Because I can't by day
If I was able I would come by
Anytime of day or night.

Yo tenía mi cascabel
Con cinco cascabelitos
Y como era de oropel
Se lo di a mis hermanitos
Para que jueguen con el
Y se diviertan solitos.

Ay como resuma y suena
Resumba y va resumbando
Resumba y va resumbando
Mi cascabel en la arena.

Yo tenía mi cascabel
Con una cinta morada
y como era de oropel
Se lo di a mi prenda amada
Para que juegue con el
Allá por la madrugada.

Ay solita ay soledad
Soledad que así decía
De noche te vengo a ver
Por que no puedo en el día
Y si pudiera viniera
A todas horas del día.

I had my rattle
With five little rattles
And because it was made of tinsel
I gave it to my little brothers
So that they could play with it
And have fun by themselves.

Oh, how it resonates
Resonates and sounds
Resonates and sounds
My rattle in the sand.

I had a rattle
With a purple ribbon
And as it was silver
I gave it to my love
So she could play with it
There at dawn.

Oh, loneliness
Loneliness as they say
I visit you at night
Because I can't by day
If only I could visit
Anytime of day.

6. LA MORENA

Morena, como te llamas?
Me llamo Juana María
Si te corren de tu casa
Te vendrás para la mía.

What's your name, sweetheart?
My name is Juana Maria
If they throw you out of your house
Come over to mine.

Que morena que morena
Morena como te llamas?
y vuelvo a decir morena
Me llamo juana María.

What a pretty gal, what a cute girl!
Pretty gal, what's your name?
And I say it again
My name is Juana Maria.

A la torre del olvido
Me subieron con cadenas
Si usted me hubiera querido
No fueran tantas mis penas
Ni anduviera yo perdido
Mirando caras ajenas.

At the tower of oblivion
They hoisted me up with chains
If you had loved me
I would not suffer as much
Nor walk here, lost
Staring at others' faces.

No llores hermana no
Por mala que sea la suerte
Que hasta ni la misma muerte
Hará que te olvide yo.

Don't cry, sister,
Over your bad fortune,
Until my own death
I will never forget you.

Ay adiós adiós adiós
Hasta ni la misma muerte
Otra vuelta y mas adiós
Hará que te olvide yo.

Oh, goodbye, goodbye
Until my own death
One more turn and goodbye
I will never forget you.

Tengo luto compañero
Ya se murió quien yo amaba
Dejeme llorar que quiero

I mourn, my friend
My loved one died
Let me cry if I want

Ver si llorando se acaba
Este dolor lastimero.

To see if crying stops
This pitiful pain.

He visto al águila herida
Volar al azul sereno
Y morir en su guarida
La víbora del veneno.

I have seen a wounded eagle
Flying into the dark blue night
And a poisonous snake die
In its lair from its own venom.

Adiós adiós morenita adiós
Ay adiós adiós adiós
Y vuelvo a decir adiós
Otra vuelta y mas adiós.

Goodbye, morena, goodbye
Oh, goodbye, goodbye
I return to say goodbye
One more turn and goodbye.

Dicen que te vas mañana
Que te vas y ya no vuelves
Los suspiros que doy
Son pa que de mi te acuerdes
Por que yo también me voy.

They say you leave tomorrow
That you leave and won't return
These sighs of mine
Are so that you remember me
Because I am also leaving.

Si tu querer me desprecia
Porque tienes nuevo amante
No debes ponerte necia
Con no quererme es bastante.

If you want me to despair
Because you have a new lover
Don't rub it in, because
Not loving me was enough.

Ay adiós adiós adiós
No debes ponerte necia
Otra vuelta y mas adiós
Con no quererme es bastante.

Oh, goodbye, goodbye, goodbye
Don't rub it in
Another turn and another goodbye
Not loving me was enough by itself.

Malhaya quien me dio a mi
Tanto amor para quererle
Ahora tengo que sufrir
El amarte y no tenerle.

Damn whoever gave me
So much love for you!
Now I must suffer
To love you and not have you.

9. EL ZAPATEADO (THE CLOG DANCE)

Suspiros al viento doy
Y remedio no consigo
A cada paso que doy
Quisiera verme contigo
Para saber si es que soy
De tu amor correspondido.

I sigh into the wind
I can't find relief
Every step I take
I would love to see us together
In order to find out
If you love me too.

En una huerta corté
Una naranja manteca
Ahí solito lloré
Por una mujer tuxteca
Cuando de ella me acordé.

In a garden I cut
A sour orange
There I cried all alone
For a woman from the Tuxtlas
When I thought of her.

Tlacotalpan es la cuna
De las mujeres mas bellas
Donde brilla mas la luna
Y el cielo es con mas estrellas
Por eso yo a Dios le pido
Que deje una de ellas.

Tlacotalpan is home
To the most beautiful women
Where the moon shines brightest
And the sky is filled with stars
And that's why I ask God
To give me one.

Cómo la luna de llena
Muestra todo su esplendor
Así preciosa morena
Yo te he mostrado mi amor
Con su creciente mas plena
Con el cariño mayor.

As the full moon
Shines in all its splendor
My precious Darling,
I have shown you my love,
In its fullest light,
And with greatest affection.

Dichoso el árbol que da
Uvas pera y manzanas
Pero mas dichoso yo
Que tengo diez contratadas
Tres solteras y tres viudas
Y cuatro recién casadas.

Happy is the tree that grows
Grapes, pears, and apples
But I am even happier
Because I have ten lovers,
Three singles, three widows,
And four newlyweds.

Si por desdicha perdiera
Tu amorosa estimación
Sin que motivos te diera
Preferiría con razón
Que una serpiente, una fiera
Me arrancara el Corazón.

If by misfortune I were to lose
Your loving ways
With good reason
I would prefer
That a serpent or beast
Tear out my heart.

Eres como miel dorada
De un panal de la sabana
Pero que estas bien lograda
Escuchame soberana
Que esta vida Tirana
También lo bueno se acaba.

You are like golden honey
From a hive on the savannah
But you are very well off.
Listen to me, proud woman!
In this difficult life
Good things also come to an end.

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