

FLACO JIMENEZ "Flaco's Amigos"

photo: Nelson Allen



Flaco & Fred Ojeda



Flaco & Ry Cooder
photo: Chris Strachwitz



Oscar Telles, Flaco & Peter Rowan

photo: Chris Strachwitz

1. LA TUMBA SERA EL FINAL (**Bolero**) • (Vocal: Fred & Flaco) (A)
2. THE FREE MEXICAN AIR FORCE • (Vocal: Peter & Flaco) (B)
3. LUCERITO (**Ranchera**) • (Vocal: Flaco & Toby) (B)
4. DID I TELL YOU • (Vocal: Oscar & Flaco) (B)
5. PARA TODA LA VIDA (**Ranchera**) • (Vocal: Fred & Flaco) (A)
6. ESPERO TU REGRESO (**Bolero**) • (Vocal: Flaco) (B)
7. I'M GONNA LOVE YOU, LIKE THERE IS NO TOMORROW • (Vocal: Peter & Flaco) (B)
8. JENNETTE (**Instrumental**) • (Mandolin: Ry) (C)
9. MI PRIMER AMOR (**Ranchera**) • (Vocal: Fred & Flaco) (A)
10. YO QUISIERA SABER (**Ranchera**) • (Vocal: Fred & Flaco) (A)
11. POQUITA FE (**Instrumental Bolero**) • (Slide Guitar: Ry) (C)
12. ATOTONILCO (**Instrumental Polka**) • (C)
13. TE QUIERO MAS (**Bolero**) • (Vocal: Fred & Flaco) (A)
14. LA FERIA POLKA (**Instrumental**) • (C)



Executive producer: Chris Strachwitz
Cover Photo: Al Rendon
Design: Elizabeth Weil

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FLACO'S AMIGOS FLACO JIMENEZ



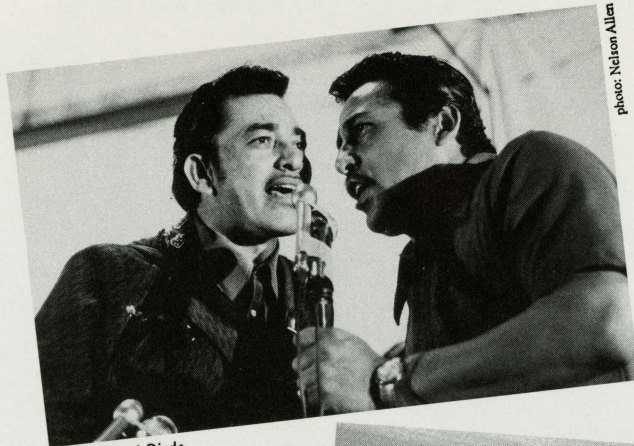


photo: Nelson Allen

Flaco & Fred Ojeda



photo: Chris Strachwitz

Flaco & Ry Cooder

FLACO JIMENEZ • Flaco's Amigos

Session (A): Flaco Jimenez-vocals & accordion; Fred Ojeda-vocals and bajo sexto; Rubén Ovalle-bass. Produced (as LOS SARGENTOS DEL BRAVO) by Joe S. Lopez for Joey Records in 1986 in San Antonio, Tx.

Session (B): Flaco Jimenez-vocals & accordion; Oscar Telles-bajo sexto & vocal; Peter Rowan-vocals & guitar; Toby Torres-vocal; Ruben Valle-bass; Isaac Garcia-drums. Produced by Chris Strachwitz, San Antonio, Tx. January 21, 1988.

Session (C): Flaco Jimenez-accordion; Ry Cooder-guitar (B-4), mandolin (B-1), and bajo sexto (B-5 & B-7); Jim Keltner-drums; Miguel Cruz-percussion; Jorge Calderon-bass; Van Dyke Parks-piano; Don Garcia-alto sax. Produced by Ry Cooder, Santa Monica, Ca. June 1987.

In 1979 I was encamped with The Free Mexican Air Force somewhere in South Texas. We used to listen to Norteno, Tex-Mex style music broadcast out of San Antonio over our "ghetto-blasters" as we sat around the campfire late in those magic Texas nights. The most persistent, passionate sound was Flaco Jimenez y su conjunto, and so late one Sunday evening we climbed in the pick-up truck and headed down to San Antonio to hear Flaco at Irene Y Fidelito Cantina, on the outskirts of town.

I brought along my mandola and after enjoying six sets of rockin' Tex-Mex, with every other song dedicated on my behalf, Flaco and I began to jam in the parking lot, sitting on the tailgate of the truck. The Texas moon was full and we played "music of the falling stars" as Flaco called it. As we played "Never On Sunday" an intoxicated hombre wove his way over until he stood almost between us, swaying slightly in the warm breeze. As we finished with a flourish and smiles all around, the entranced aficionado let out a "grito" and threw up an entire four course "Mexican Special Plate" all over our shoes before passing out with a beautiful smile on his face. It was a sublime moment and we serenaded him in his slumber before calling it a night.

Since that night I have been honored to share in some of Flaco's international musical triumphs as a friend and musician. We have made a few records in the States and England and I am tickled to be in such fine company again on THIS one!

Flaco you deserve it all, because you give your soul completely, holding nothing back. Amigo, I'm always ready to play "una más" with you; and "gracias" for the new shoes!

I remember the sunrise in Edinborough, Scotland after an all night Jam session following a concert. We stood on the sidewalk just before dawn, and as Flaco played a slow air, our host danced a graceful jig. He turned to Flaco with tears in his eyes, recognizing the melody as Scottish, having come back home all the way from South Texas. As we stood in the cool dawn, overlooking "Archer's Seat" above Edinborough town, I realized Flaco's greatest gift: to let each listener re-discover the common thread of unchained melody, each in their own language. Gracias amigo, viva la Música; el gusto es mío!

(Peter Rowan)

It's been a privilege to play with Flaco—I've thought that the greatest thrill in music is to meet up with somebody who's different and go on a little trip—you might make some kind of discovery together. Flaco was always ready to set out, on foot, pretty much of the time—and he really takes me to a place that is special. He does it with elegance and style, and I think we have played some great music that gets better along the pathway.

(Ry Cooder)

Leonardo "Flaco" Jimenez has played a lot of dances and made a lot of recordings during his more than 30 year career as a popular "conjunto" accordionist in Texas. During the past 15 of these years Flaco has received some recognition from musicians and folk music fans outside of Texas. In his home town of San Antonio Flaco is usually taken for granted but in 1987 the city, its media, and public gave Flaco Jimenez a huge welcome when he returned from Los Angeles after winning a GRAMMY in the best Mexican-American Category for his Arhoolie album "*AY TE DEJO EN SAN ANTONIO*" (3021). Thanks largely to the tireless efforts of Juan Tejeda of the Guadalupe Cultural Center, San Antonio has been honoring and recognizing the wonderful cultural and musical contributions made by the "conjunto" or Norteno musicians of South Texas at the annual Conjunto Festival in May. After generations of dancers and party goers have nurtured and kept this tradition alive, the world at large is beginning to notice these delightful, danceable sounds coming from a simple diatonic accordion and the duet voices. Los Lobos have made the contemporary music world aware of conjunto music. Linda Ronstadt is now bringing Mexican country music to the masses with the help of the mariachi tradition. Mexican American music is finally beginning to be noticed outside the usual *chicharrón* circuit.

Flaco's previous recordings have all been with his own conjunto, bringing you a good sampling of what you would hear at his dances. This recording came about when Flaco's long time friend and musical collaborator Ry Cooder offered Flaco several selections which they had recorded together to be used on Flaco's next album (session C). Ry plays mandolin on "Jennette" and slide guitar in the style of Santo and Johnny on "Poquita Fe". The two polkas represent wonderful examples of the "Monterrey sound" with the close harmony between the accordion and alto sax with Ry supplying the solid bajo sexto accompaniment. Flaco has enjoyed his role as a sideman with Ry Cooder's band enormously because it has given him the opportunity to explore new musical genres and sounds. In this setting Flaco has been able to play the part of the pure musician rather than facing the pressures and demands of his usual role as leader and vocalist.

With his friend Peter Rowan, Flaco's role has also been the "combiner", as he puts it, but more to underscore the fine voice of Peter Rowan, who comes from the Bluegrass and Folk tradition but is also beginning to explore other more esoteric styles.

I requested the new version of "The Free Mexican Air Force" and Peter came up with the haunting new song "I'm Gonna Love You" which had just about all of us crying. During this session Flaco also taped a couple of songs featuring his own present-day sound. On the duet number *Lucerito* he is joined by Toby Torres who was a mainstay and vocal partner of Flaco's conjunto in the 1960s. During the same session Flaco's current bajo sexto player Oscar Telles is heard throughout and sings on the English "Did I Tell You."

In contrast to these outings into the realms of Anglo and World music with Ry Cooder and Peter Rowan, Flaco has long been an admirer of the "god-fathers" of Norteno music: Los Alegres de Terán. About a year ago Flaco and his old vocal partner Fred Ojeda (who was his duet singer in the 1970s when Les Blank and I filmed him for the documentary *Chulas Fronteras*) recorded ten songs associated with and popularized by Los Alegres de Terán (session A). Fred takes the lead (Tomás Ortiz' role) and Flaco sings the higher segunda part (Eugenio Abrego's). I was absolutely taken by the hauntingly pure sound of these songs and am grateful to Joey Lopez for making five of them available for inclusion on this album.

Thanks, Flaco! And thanks to your amigos: Fred Ojeda, Peter Rowan, Ry Cooder, Oscar Telles, Toby Torres, and all the members of the conjuntos for making this lovely record possible.

(Chris Strachwitz - March 1988)

1. La tumba será el final

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.

Coro:

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

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.

Coro:

1. It Will All End In the Grave

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 be against it,
we must love each other.

Chorus:

It will all end in the grave,
that will be our final separation;
though if God is willing,
even there I will keep on loving you.

They lie when they tell you that I don't
love you,
I loved only my mother more than I love you.

She has blessed us from heaven,
and in a dream she told me that you would
be mine.

Chorus:

3. Lucerito

¿Dónde estás lucerito de mi alma?
que en las noches te vivo soñando.
Tú me dices que te siga esperando--
¿hasta cuándo te voy a esperar?

Inborrable te llevo en mi mente,
esperando de ti una esperanza.
Ya mis brazos te esperan con ansia
de llevarte conmigo al altar.

3. Little Star

Where are you my little star?
at night I'm with you in my dreams.
You keep telling me to wait for you,
but just how long must I wait?

I'm always waiting and always hoping,
you are always on my mind.
With open arms I'm waiting
to take you to the altar with me.

5. Para toda la vida

Quando te hablé de cariño,
jamás te dije mentira.
Quería tenerte en mis brazos,
pero por toda la vida.

Y tú querías aventura;
tomaste muy mal camino.

Ibas buscando basura
en un terreno barrido.

Coro:

Yo le doy mi querer al querer,
y lo doy para toda la vida.
Si quisiera vivir de placer,
me buscara un amor de cantina.

Quando estuviste conmigo
tenías un mal pensamiento.
Si yo lo hubiera sabido,
no hubiera perdido el tiempo.

Tendrás el mundo en tus manos;
tendrás montones de pesos.
Si a otros los tienes llorando,
conmigo topaste en hueso.

Coro:

5. I Wanted You Forever

When I spoke those loving words to you;
I was only telling the truth.
I wanted you in my arms,
I wanted you forever.

But you were only looking for
a one night stand.
You went looking for trash
on a clean swept lot.

Chorus:

When I love, I give all of my love,
and I give it 'til the day I die.
If I were only interested in a little fun,
I'd find love in the nearest cantina.

When you were with me it's clear
you had the wrong idea.
If I had known, I wouldn't have
wasted my time.

You probably have the world in your hands;
you probably have millions of dollars.
But even if you've got other guys crying over
you,
with me you ran up against a tough old bone.

Chorus:

6. Espero tu regreso

Amor ¿por qué te vas tan lejos?
¿Por qué te llevas mi existencia?
Si sabes que llevas en ti
el calor de mis besos.

Amor ¿por qué te vas tan lejos?
No olvides que espero tu regreso;
te espero con ansias de besar.

Coro:

Amor ¿por qué te vas tan lejos?
¿Por qué me dejas mi alma herida?
si sabes que llevas en ti
el calor de mis besos.
Amor ¿por qué te vas tan lejos?

Amor, no sabes cuánto te extraño,
cuánto te quiero . . . y un día de estos
espero tu regreso . . .

No olvides que espero tu regreso;
te espero con ansias de besar.

Coro:

6. I Await Your Return

My love, why are you going so far away?
Why are you stealing my existence?
if you know you're carrying inside you
the warmth of my kisses.

My love, why are you going so far away?
Don't forget that I await your return
and am longing to kiss you again.

Chorus:

My love, why are you going so far away?
Why do you leave me with a wounded soul?
if you know you're carrying inside you
the warmth of my kisses.

My love, why are you going so far away?

You don't know how much I miss you,
how much I love you . . . I'm waiting for you
to come back one of these days . . .

Don't forget that I await your return
and am longing to kiss you again.

Chorus:

9. Mi primer amor.

Sabes vida mía por qué lloro,
porque te quiero, porque te adoro.
Sabes que nunca te he olvidado,
porque tú fuiste mi primer amor.

Coro:

Paso las horas, paso los días, paso los años
sufriendo a solas, chatita mía, tu desengaño.
Sabes que nunca te he olvidado,
porque tú fuiste mi primer amor.

Amo el aroma de las flores
recuerdo siempre de tus amores.
Mira, encantadora y fresca brisa,
con tu sonrisa me haces soñar.

Coro:

9. My First Love

You know, my love, why I'm crying,
because I love you, because I adore you.
You know I've never forgotten you,
because you were my first love.

Chorus:

I spend my hours, my days, my years,
suffering all alone, my dear gal, your decep-
tion.

You know I've never forgotten you,
because you were my first love.

I love the perfume of the flowers,
always a reminder of your love.
Listen, oh fresh and enchanting breeze,
you make me dream of your smile.

Chorus:

10. Yo quisiera saber

Yo quisiera saber lo que sientes
si no estás conmigo . . .
si en el fondo de tu alma palpita
por mí un pensamiento.

Nos queremos mi vida, mi cielo,
con fe y con locura . . .
y en silencio nos damos un beso
como un juramento.

Si el destino, traidor y cobarde,
de mí se apartara,
que se lleve mi vida en pedazos
muy lejos el viento,
que se borre en el mundo el recuerdo
de nuestros amores;
con mi sangre tu nombre se escriba
en el firmamento.

Yo quisiera saber quién te quiso como
yo te quiero . . .

si en mis brazos te sientes dichosa
y le gritas al cielo.

Me acaricias, me abrazas, me besas
con honda ternura,
y el sollozo que sale de tu alma
me dice: --Te quiero.
y el sollozo que sale de tu alma
me dice: --Te quiero.

10. I Would Like To Know

I would like to know how you feel
when you aren't with me . . .
if in the depths of your soul
there doesn't throb for me a thought.
We love each other, my life, my heaven,
with faith and with crazy passion . . .
and in silence we kiss each other
as a vow of our love.

If destiny, traitor and coward (that it is),
were to separate us, then let the
shattered pieces of my life be

scattered afar by the wind,
then let the memory of our love
be erased from the world,
and let your name be written across
the heavens with my blood.

I would like to know who has
loved you as I do . . .
if in my arms you feel so happy
and you scream it out to the heavens.
You caress me, you squeeze me, you kiss
me with deep tenderness,
and the sobs that rise out of your soul
say to me: "I love you."
and the sobs that rise out of your soul
say to me: "I love you."

13. Te quiero más

Cuando me duermo, te estoy soñando;
despierto para pensar en ti.
Cuando trabajo te estoy mirando,
cuando platico, nada es de mí.

Nunca jamás podré abandonarte;
he de seguirte por dónde vas.
Si no me quieres, yo sí te quiero;
si me desprecias, te quiero más.
(Estas dos se repiten)

Cuando te enojas, yo soy la calma;
si estás alegre, todo es cantar.
Así como eres, así te quiero;
aunque no quieras, yo te he de amar.

Si así me dices: --Que sí te quiero;
si así me pides que te ame más,
soy marinero y tú eres la estrella
de mi esperanza en medio del mar,
y en la que tuve noche de luna
vuelvo a sentir tu amor mucho más.

13. I Love You More

When I fall asleep, I'm dreaming of you,
and I wake up just so I can think about you.
While I'm working, I see only you,
when I make conversation, it's never about myself.

I could never ever leave you,
and I must follow you wherever you go.
If you don't love me, I do love you,
and if you spurn me, I love you all the more.
(These last two lines are repeated)

When you get angry, I am calm,
and when you're happy, life's a song.
Just as you are, that's how I love you,
and even if you don't wish it to be so,
I must always love you.

So if you tell me: "Yes, I love you,"
and if you demand that I love you more,
then I'm a sailor and you're the star of my
hope in the middle of the sea.
And on that night when the moon shines,
I return to feel your love all the more.

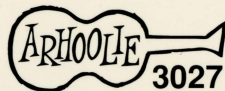
Transcriptions and translations of songs by Zack Salem
and Jamie Nicolopulos



Oscar Telles, Flaco, & Peter Rowan

Flaco Jiménez

"Flaco's Amigos"



1. **LA TUMBA SERA EL FINAL** (*F. Vidal*) (Bolero)
(Vocal: Fred & Flaco) (2:45)
2. **THE FREE MEXICAN AIR FORCE** (*Peter Rowan*)
(Vocal: Peter & Flaco) (4:45)
3. **LUCERITO** (*Santiago Jiménez*) (Ranchera)
(Vocal: Flaco & Toby) (2:34)
4. **DID I TELL YOU** (*G. Povey, A. Meyers*)
(Vocal: Oscar & Flaco) (2:34)
5. **PARA TODA LA VIDA** (Ranchera)
(Vocal: Fred & Flaco) (2:44)
6. **ESPERO TU REGRESO** (*D. Garzes*) (Bolero)
(Vocal: Flaco) (3:00)
7. **I'M GONNA LOVE YOU, LIKE
THERE IS NO TOMORROW** (*Peter Rowan*)
(Vocal: Peter & Flaco) (3:24)
8. **JENNETTE** (*Harold*) (Instrumental)
(Mandolin: Ry) (4:20)
9. **MI PRIMER AMOR** (Ranchera)
(Vocal: Fred & Flaco) (2:37)

10. **YO QUISIERA SABER** (*G. Parra*)
(Ranchera) (Vocal: Fred & Flaco) (2:55)
11. **POQUITA FE** (Instrumental Bolero)
(Slide Guitar: Ry) (4:19)
12. **ATOTONILCO** (Polka)
(2:11)
13. **TE QUIERO MAS** (Bolero)
(Vocal: Fred & Flaco) (2:48)
14. **LA FERIA POLKA** (Instrumental)
(2:12)

Total time: 43:15

Executive producer: Chris Strachwitz
Cover Photo: Al Rendon
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