

LOS MONTAÑESES DEL ALAMO

FIRST RECORDINGS 1940 - 1950

Arhoolie
7021

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. BAILANDO (polka) | 15. HUMILDE CORAZON
(cancion) vocal: Carmen y Jaime |
| 2. POBRE DE MI (schottis) | 16. VALENTE QUINTERO (corrido)
vocal: Carmen y Jaime |
| 3. DOS CERES (cancion) | 17. EL NOPALITO (polka) |
| 4. DEL ALAMO A SAN FRANCISCO (polka) | 18. LA BURRITA (cancion)
vocal: Jaime Mier |
| 5. EL NUEVO DESTERRADO
(cancion) | 19. ENTRE AMIGOS (schottis) |
| 6. VAMOS A LA ADUANA (schottis) | 20. LA RECIEN POLVEADA
(polka) |
| 7. MORENITA ENCANTADORA
(cancion) | 21. YO NACI' PA' QUERERTE
(cancion) |
| 8. MI SUSANITA (polka) | 22. LA PRECIOSITA (polka) |
| 9. EL HUERFANO (corrido) | 23. MI PRIETA LINDA (cancion) |
| 10. VAMOS A LA ALBERCA
(schottis) | 24. VAMOS AL FANDANGO (vals) |
| 11. ADIOS, ADIOS (cancion) | 25. MI VIDA (cancion) |
| 12. YA LO PAGARAS CON DIOS
(cancion) | 26. ALAMO POLKA (polka) |
| 13. NO VES MUJER (cancion) | 27. EL CORRIDO DE ARNULFO
GONZALEZ |
| 14. ASI SON LAS MUJERES
(cancion) | |

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LOS MONTAÑESES DEL ALAMO



PRIMER GRABACIONES: 1940 - 1950
FIRST RECORDINGS

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7021

1. **BAILANDO** (polka) (Pedro Mier)
(B 3408A)
2. **POBRE DE MI** (schottis)
(Pedro Mier) (B 3408B)
3. **DOS CERES** (cancion) (Pedro Mier)
(B3443A)
4. **DEL ALAMO A SAN FRANCISCO**
(polka) (B 3419A)
5. **EL NUEVO DESTERRADO**
(cancion) (Gabriel Luna -
Antonio Escobar) (B3443B)
6. **VAMOS A LA ADUANA** (schottis)
(Pedro Mier) (B 3419B)
7. **MORENITA ENCANTADORA**
(cancion) (Pedro Mier) (B 3469A)
8. **MI SUSANITA** (polka) (B 3469B)
9. **EL HUERFANO** (corrido) (Id 25A)
10. **VAMOS A LA ALBERCA** (schottis)
(Id 25B)
11. **ADIOS, ADIOS** (cancion) (Id 24-1)
12. **YA LO PAGARAS CON DIOS**
(cancion) (Saveriano Briseño) (Id 24-2)
13. **NO VES MUJER** (cancion) (Id 33-1)
14. **ASI SON LAS MUJERES** (cancion)
(Id 33-2)
15. **HUMILDE CORAZON** (cancion)
(Nicandro Mier) (Id 32-2)
vocal: Carmen y Jaime

16. **VALENTE QUINTERO** (corrido)
(Id 32-1) vocal: Carmen y Jaime
17. **EL NOPALITO** (polka) (Pedro Mier)
(Id 154-2)
18. **LA BURRITA** (cancion)
(Ventura Romero) (Id 154-1)
vocal: Jaime Mier
19. **ENTRE AMIGOS** (schottis)
(Pedro Mier) (Id 171-2)
20. **LA RECIEN POLVEADA** (polka)
(Pedro Mier) (Id 171-1)
21. **YO NACI' PA' QUERERTE**
(cancion) (Nicandro Mier Perez)
(U 101A - A 8719)
22. **LA PRECIOSITA** (polka)
(Pedro Mier) (U 101B)
23. **MI PRIETA LINDA** (cancion)
(Nicandro Mier) (U 106B - A 9520)
24. **VAMOS AL FANDANGO** (vals)
(DAR) (U 109A - 9892)
25. **MI VIDA** (cancion) (Ramon Tamez)
(U 109B - 9893)
26. **ALAMO POLKA** (polka) (DAR)
(U 106A - A9519)
27. **EL CORRIDO DE ARNULFO
GONZALEZ** (DAR)
(Anf 10-111A - AB 355)

LOS MONTAÑESES DEL ALAMO

Pedro Mier
flute

Nicandro Mier
violin

Jaime Mier
bajo sexto & main vocals

Guadalupe Cavazos (?)
string bass

**Fidencio Almaguer
Esparza**
sax (on # 13 - 27)



This is probably the personnel for the group on these recordings with the bass player an uncertainty. The second voice on the vocal duets is probably Jaime's brother, Nicandro Mier. The female duet with Jaime on # 15 & 16 is Carmen Marroquin Cantu, of Carmen y Laura fame and wife of the Ideal firm's recording director, Armando Marroquin. The masters for selections # 21 - 26 were among the IDEAL test pressings but were not issued by that firm. Does anyone know which label, if any, originally issued these six selections?

1 - #8 recorded ca. 1940 & 1941
9 - 16 recorded in 1946
17 - 20 recorded ca. 1947-48
21 - 27 recorded ca. 1949-50

Re-issue edited and produced by
Chris Strachwitz
Notes by Guillermo Berrones, translated
and introduction by Zac Salem with
editing by Chris Strachwitz
Cover photo courtesy Los Montañeses
Del Alamo (ca. 1940)
Sound restoration by George Morrow
Graphic design by Morgan Dodge

THE MEXICAN ORQUESTA DE BAILE - An Introduction by Zac Salem

Instrumental European salon music enjoyed wide popularity throughout Mexico in the latter half of the nineteenth century, really taking off during the reign of Emperor Maximilian in the 1860s. The polka, waltz, schottis, mazurka and march dominated the popular musical taste at dances and social gatherings. In addition to these fashionable European rhythms, the habanera, danza, and paso-doble, became staples of Mexican musical culture, and by the 1870s a whole school of Mexican composers grew to specialize in this style of music. Native songwriters such as Felipe Villanueva, Abundio Martínez, and Juventino Rosas (whose waltz "Over The Waves" {Sobre Las Olas} became one of the biggest international hits of all time) were all leaders of small string ensembles (known as "orquestas de

baile") that performed at popular dances. These small groups generally consisted of violin, string bass, *guitarra séptima* (an eleven-stringed guitar) mandolin (or *bandurria*), and occasionally flute. Up through the time of the Mexican Revolution in 1910, nearly every town in Mexico had a small orchestra of this kind, in addition to the ubiquitous brass bands of the era.

In the north and northeast portion of Mexico this style of music remained especially deep rooted, perhaps owing in part to an influx of German immigrants to the region in the late nineteenth century whose own ethnic music inspired and coincided with parts of the norteño music tradition. The introduction of the button accordion as a lead instrument and the bajo sexto as a bass accompaniment were two distinct

elements that began to characterize the small musical ensembles in northern Mexico by the late 1920s. The accordion at first gained popularity very slowly and primarily with rural and poor urban audiences. The first recordings of the instrument in the larger border region were made in the early 1930s. One northern group that retained the older style instrumentation and flavor of the nineteenth century

orquesta de baile, while developing a more modern, regional repertory, was **Los Montañeses Del Alamo**. Although they brought in a saxophonist in addition to the flute and violin by the early 1950s, Los Montañeses never used an accordion on their recordings, which since the 1940s has become the main instrument in Norteño conjuntos.

LOS MONTAÑESES DEL ALAMO - by Guillermo Berrones

One of the groups that has the longest tradition in northeastern Mexico, beginning in 1926 and continuing to the present day, is Los Montañeses Del Alamo. Their history is a part of the cultural legacy of the state of Nuevo Leon, and is divided into five periods in which they have been guided by the musical inheritance of the Mier family. With a few of the following notes taken from the small

book "Los Montaneses Del Alamo" by Nuevo Leon historian Juan Alanis Tamez, as well as an interview with Pedro Mier Salinas, we offer this short history of one of the best traditional groups in northeastern Mexico.

In the community known as Las Abras, in the municipality of Cadereyta Jiménez, Nuevo Leon, Pedro Mier Mier was born, the son of Servando Mier and Amada Mier. The

mountains belong to the Sierra Madre Oriental and highway 85 runs through this region, connecting Monterrey with Ciudad Victoria in the state of Tamaulipas and this highway has attracted a lot of commerce and tourism since it opened.

Ever since childhood Pedro Mier was interested in music, which he pursued while alternating with work in the fields. By 1925 he was playing the bajo sexto when a neighbor, Isidoro Leija, invited him to join him in a duet (Isidoro y Pedro) to play in cantinas, at family reunions, and friends parties. Don Isidoro could play various instruments and taught Pedro to play the flute. From his first marriage Pedro had two sons, Carlos, who died very young, and Nicandro Mier Perez. The name of the mother of these children is not known, but when she died Pedro married her sister Doña Margarita Perez Escobedo, with whom he had four more children: Sigifredo, Jaime,

Hilda, and Pompeyo. When his second wife died, he married again, this time a woman named Emilia, but they had no further children. Several years after Pedro had learned to play the flute (the first was a hand-made one from a reed), he brought in his son Nicandro to play violin. Thus a group was born, and they called themselves Orquesta De Las Abras. Later, Isidoro Leija taught Jaime Mier to play the bajo sexto, at which time La Orquesta De Las Abras began to gain considerable popularity in the region.

On weekends, after the week's work in the fields, the orquesta performed at parties, weddings, quinceañeras and baptisms in the area. When these occasions did not present themselves, the group looked to earn a few pesos by playing in cantinas. Not long after Isidoro became ill, moved away and soon died in Altamira, Tamaulipas. With the absence of Isidoro, the orquesta now consisted of Pedro Mier

on flute, Nicandro Mier on violin, Jaime Mier on bajo sexto, and Guadalupe Cavazos on string bass.

In his book, Juan Alanis collected the following interesting anecdote told by Jesus Cavazos: "They had to start from the bottom. They came to El Cercado just as what they were: poor musicians from Las Abras that went from cantina to cantina on Sundays, beginning at the Salon Alameda in San Javier, Santiago, NL. But before going out they would eat well in a restaurant that belonged to my grandfather Don Praxedis Torres, who had everything on the menu: atole, tacos, enchiladas, comida corrida, fritadas.... and if they didn't have any money, he let them pay later. Then they would go out and play in the cantinas of Los Cercados. First to the Salon Alameda, and then to the cantina of Don Pancho Villegas, and then to the cantina of Don Pancho Sias, and then they would continue on to Timoteo Perez's

cantina, situated at the corner of the highway and the "Cola De Caballo" (a tourist stop). It is worth mentioning that to get from Las Abras to El Cercado, or to the other communities in Santiago, NL, one has to cross the mountains of the sierra and in those days there were only a few rough roads. San Pedro De Los Salazares is another community that belongs to the municipality of Santiago and it is located on highway 85, about thirty four kilometers from Monterrey, the capital of the state. In this place, Don Alfonso M. Salazar Tamez, municipal president of Santiago between 1937 and 1938, put up a restaurant called "El Alamo." There, in addition to typical regional food, he had a mechanic, a small zoo with animals native to the region including bears from the Sierra Madre, a grocery store, and a swimming pool. This resort was frequented for many years by the citizens of Monterrey in search of a

weekend getaway. Don Alfonso hired the Orquesta De Las Abras to entertain the diners at his restaurant, at which time the group gained even wider notoriety and was able to grow artistically. The restaurant became a traditional landmark, whose name changed the character of San Pedro De Los Salazares, until the town itself became known as El Alamo. The Orquesta De Las Abras during those years consisted of Pedro Mier on Flute, Nicandro on violin, Jaime on bajo sexto, and Wenceslao Moreno Díaz on string bass.

The characteristic style of the group and the fame they had acquired at El Alamo made it possible for Don Alfonso to sponsor a radio program at a station in Monterrey where the orchestra played live. Later Don Alfonso sponsored them on XEFB and XET in Monterrey, and years later at XEW in Mexico City. They were getting more and more offers as time

went by, and on one occasion (around 1935) , when they were invited to perform at a radio festival in the city of Nuevo Laredo, the announcer asked for the name of the group in order to introduce them, and they said that they called themselves "La Orquesta De Las Abras." The announcer told them he couldn't introduce them with such an unattractive name, so he asked for more information on where they were from. Don Pedro commented that Las Abras was a community that belonged to Cadereyta Jiménez where he and his sons were from and that they played in the communities of the region at parties and birthdays, but that for the most part they played at Don Alfonso's restaurant, "El Alamo." He mentioned that they had to cross the mountains of the Sierra Madre Oriental to get there. That was the kind of information that pleased the announcer who baptized them with the name Los Montañeses Del Alamo!

According to the living members of the family, Los Montañeses Del Alamo made their first recordings in 1938. However, according to discographical research, Chris Strachwitz has determined that the first recordings were made in 1940 (#1 & 2: M-045474 & M-045475). The recordings were probably made at XET or one of the other radio stations over which the group was broadcasting at the time. Selections # 3, 5, & 7 which are of poorer sound quality, were recorded in 1941 (# 7 is M-054326) but unfortunately recorded at a station which apparently had a rather poor quality microphone!

Since the middle 1940s, Los Montañeses Del Alamo have toured widely and brought their characteristic sound to many parts of Mexico. Their classic repertory of polkas, redovas, chotises, corridos, and canciones (some of them written by Pedro Mier and his sons), as well as the promotional

support of Don Alfonso, and the warmth with which they have been received by the Mexican public, all have made Los Montañeses Del Alamo a traditional group representative of the musical culture from the northeast of Mexico. Although the group recorded several more sessions for Victor in Mexico during the 1940s, they were also trying to find outlets for their music on the Texas side of the border. Ideal Records of San Benito, Texas, was the first important regional record label run by Mexican-Americans and began production in earnest in April of 1946 with almost all recordings made in Alice, Texas, under the able guidance of Armando Marroquín. Later that year Los Montañeses Del Alamo found their way to his little studio and later returned on several more occasions. In those days (as is still the case) records were important promotional tools and since Ideal had distribution on both sides of the border, it was important to

be on that label. At the time the major Mexican labels (Peerless and Victor were just about it!) paid little attention to "musica regional" as it was always known, but since Ideal Records seemed to be successful, firms on the Mexican side also soon got into the act. Columbia Records in Mexico began its recording and pressing operations in 1946 but very quickly became aware of the rising popularity of regional and especially Norteño music. Within a few years Los Montañeses Del Alamo were recording for that major firm and over the next decade made hundreds of sides for them.

Don Pedro Mier passed away at San Pedro De Los Salazares (El Alamo) in 1953. Jaime Mier then became manager of the group, while Don Pedro was replaced on flute by Pedro Castañeda from Mina, N.L. Mr. Castañeda was a member of the group for eight years, until one day at a gathering of friends he got to drinking

with Jaime Mier, who happened to be wearing a gun belt. When he saw the gun Jaime was wearing, Pedro Castañeda exclaimed: "Guns are not for wearing on your hip" and with that he grabbed Jaime's pistol and shot himself in the head, killing himself.

The group's fame, however, continued to spread, and their tours were extended into the United States. Although they periodically experimented with adding an accordion to the group, it never really caught on with them. On February 12, 1964, Jaime Mier died of a heart attack in Queretaro while the group was en route to Mexico City. He was buried in Villa De Santiago alongside his father. The death of Jaime at age 42 caused the restructuring of the group. Nicandro continued on violin, Jesus Rodríguez was hired to play flute, Gudelio Cavazos on string bass, Esteban Aguirre on saxophone, and Valerio Marroquín replaced Jaime on bajo sexto. Nicandro

was now the leader of the group, but he had some difficulty maintaining its consistency. Some of his children formed their own group, Los Hermanos Mier, but with a very different style from Los Montañeses Del Alamo. Don Nicandro Mier passed away in December of 1973. Hearing of the trouble Nicandro had been having, younger brothers Pompeyo and Sigifredo, and Pompeyo's son Pedro Mier Salinas, made efforts to revive the group. Under their direction the group has recorded 25 LPs for various regional labels which sprang up in the early 1960s. Many LPs were issued on DLV and Del Bravo Records (both in Monterrey, N.L.) and the giant firm, Columbia/Sony continued to market their music widely.

What started out as a regional group in the 1930s has continued for over 50 years, with a unique style that has contributed not only to the personality and cultural identity of San Pedro De Los Salazares (better known as El Alamo), but to the municipality of Santiago, to the state of Nuevo Leon, and to northeastern Mexico in general. Ever since Don Isidoro Leija and Don Pedro Mier first joined their talents with the goal of supporting their families, up to the present day when Don Pedro Mier Perez and Don Pedro Mier Salinas continue to strive to preserve the legacy of their regional country music, Los Montañeses Del Alamo have been a cultural icon and a symbol of identity in the hearts of the people of northeastern Mexico.

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27. EL CORRIDO DE ARNULFO GONZALEZ

Los Montañeses Del Alamo:

Pedro Mier - flute

Nicandro Mier - violin

Jaime Mier - bajo sexto & vocals

Guadalupe Cavazos - string bass

Fidencio Almaguer Esparza - sax (# 13 - 27)

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MEXICAN-REGIONAL

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