

Mariachi los Gavilanes de Oakland

1. **No Compró Amores** (I Don't Buy Love)
(Vals-Ranchera) (Eloy Saldivar-Valdespino)
2. **San Juan Huetamo** (Son) (DAR)
3. **Me Lo Dijo Mi Madre** (My Mother Told Me)
(Vals-Ranchera) (Ramualdo Garcia Zomba)
4. **Corrido Del Mono** (Tragedia en Palo Alto)
(Ballad of the Monkey) (Tragedy in Palo Alto) (Corrido)
(arranged by Guadalupe Madrigal - Tradition Music Co.)
5. **Tragedia De Heraclio Bernal**
(The Tragedy of Heraclio Bernal) (Corrido)
(arranged by Guadalupe Madrigal - Tradition Music Co.)
6. **El Ranchero Chido** (The Elegant Rancher)
(Cumbia) (DAR)
7. **Los Traficantes de Michoacán**
(The Traffickers of Michoacán) (Corrido) (DAR)
8. **Las Higueras** (The Fig Trees) (Ranchera) (DAR)
9. **El Terreteque** (Son) (P.D.)
10. **Cuando Juegue El Albur** (When I Throw the Dice)
(Vals-Ranchera) (Jose Alfredo Jimenez)
11. **Por Un Beso** (For a Kiss) (Vals-Ranchera)
(Jose Alfredo Jimenez)
12. **Arriba Pichataro** (Son-Instrumental) (P.D.)
arranged by Guadalupe Madrigal - Tradition Music Co.)

Guadalupe Madrigal – leader, vocals (#7, 9) & guitarrón
Matías Fernández – vocals (# 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, & 11)
& vihuela
Vicente Ortega – vocals (#1, 7, 10 & 11) & guitar
Manuel Ramos, Alfredo Araiza,
& **Jose Luis Corza** – trumpets
Gabino Garita – 1st violin
Fidencio Valderrama – 3rd violin
Fidencio Moreno – 2nd violin
Emiliano Preciado – vocal (#2, 9) & 3rd violin

Credits:

Produced by Chris Strachwitz & Jaime Nicolopolus.
Notes and translations of songs by Jaime Nicolopolus
Recorded at Bay Records, Berkeley, Ca. June 17, 1990.
All photos © by Chris Strachwitz.
Graphic design by Morgan Dodge.
Cover photo: (l to r) Manuel Ramos, Guadalupe Madrigal,
Jose Luis Corza, Matias Fernandes, & Vicente Ortega
Back photo of full Mariachi: Front row l to r: Emiliano
Preciado, Matias Fernandes, Guadalupe Madrigal, &
Vicente Ortega; Back row l to r: Fidencio Moreno, Gabino
Garita, Fidencio Valderrama, Jose Luis Corza, Alfredo
Araiza, & Manuel Ramos

Mariachi los Gavilanes de Oakland



2004 up date: This recording was previously available on cassette only. Today this CD release finds Los Gavilanes de Oakland still active in the Bay Area under the same leadership of Guadalupe Madrigal. However, other members of the mariachi have changed. To contact Guadalupe Madrigal, call ARHOOIE RECORDS at 510-525-7471 and we will put you in touch with him.

MARIACHI LOS GAVILANES DE OAKLAND

Lupe Madrigal, usually playing *guitarrón* and singing, provided most of the organization and a lot more than his share of the spirit that made Los Gavilanes [Hawks] de Oakland shine out amongst the other *mariachis* that make their living playing for private parties and working the tables of the bars and restaurants of the Bay Area *barrios* of East Oakland and Redwood City, California. Lupe and his *compadre* Vicente Ortega, as well as most of the rest of the musicians who make up Los Gavilanes, hail from the southwestern

region of the state of Michoacán around the towns of Apatzingán and Coalcomán. These regional roots are sharply reflected in their repertoire. Although the Gavilanes can play all the well-known *mariachi* standards if requested to do so, they specialize in the songs of their native soil, especially when entertaining their fellow *michoacanos* in the crowded *cantinas* that line several blocks of Middlefield Road in an unincorporated area just south of Redwood City, on the San Francisco peninsula.

One example of this regional orientation is the traditional *son* “San Juan Huetamo.” (A variant of “San Juan Huetamo” by Los Campesinos de Michoacán, who are also from Coalcomán, can be heard on Arhoolie CD 9035). The final stanza refers to the infamous Antonio López de Santa Ana, perhaps best known in the United States as the victor of the Alamo but vilified in Mexico as the egomaniac responsible for the loss of a third of the national territory. In the song, Santa Ana is preparing to depart into exile. In response to his detractors, he remarks: “I’ve left you all a dead rooster, / so finish plucking it.” The “dead rooster” is clearly Mexico, and the lyrics express just as clearly the fine sarcasm so typical of traditional Mexican song.

Another much more topical tune with a regional reference is the *corrido* “Los Traficantes de Michoacán.” As

throughout the impoverished mountains and valleys of the Sierra Madre del Sur, many of the country folk around Apatzingán and Coalcomán have turned to growing opium and marijuana for cash harvests that can liberate them from the grinding poverty guaranteed by the economics of raising corn or other legal crops. It is only natural that the traffickers, with their fast and often deadly-dangerous life style, their shiny new four wheel drive vehicles, and their defiance of what is widely perceived as an unjust and oppressive system, are seen as folk heroes by many. What is more, as the old saying goes: “He who pays the piper calls the tune.” The traffickers are often the only people with plenty of money to spend on live music, so it is not surprising that so many *corridos* celebrate their deeds. In the *corrido* “Los Traficantes de

Michoacán" it is really the little towns and *ranchos* of the region, each the scene of recurrent illegal activity and well-known shoot outs between rival bands of traffickers or traffickers and the police or army, that are the object of celebration. For the immigrant relaxing with a beer after a hard day's work somewhere in "Califas," the mention of one place name from the homeland after another not only elicits nostalgia and pride, but perhaps also serves as a reminder of why he has had to come to "El Norte" in the first place.

Not all the *corridos* sung by Los Gavilanes concern events that took place in Mexico, nor are they all as general in their subject matter as "Los Traficantes de Michoacán," which only alludes obliquely to specific events. The "Corrido del Mono," for instance, commemorates the death of someone who was well-known to the members of the *mariachi*. According

to Los Gavilanes, the man known around the Middlefield Road *cantinas* as "The Monkey" was one of their most loyal and avid fans. Although reputed to be a man of "respect" in the local underworld, "The Monkey" was not an egregiously violent or abusive person. On the contrary, it was in the role of peacemaker that he met his end. Several drunken acquaintances were quarreling with increasing rancor over a game of cards, and it seemed that bloodshed was imminent. "The Monkey," not originally a party to the dispute, intervened with the intention of averting violence, but one of the men reacted by pulling out a pistol and firing at point blank range. "The Monkey," mortally wounded, drew his own weapon and shot his assailant dead on the spot before expiring himself. Because "The Monkey" was widely respected and his death was seen as heroic, it

was not long before someone composed the *corrido* commemorating both his life and his tragic demise. Los Gavilanes particularly remember him as having passed many a night requesting that the *mariachi* play song after song, especially the traditional *corrido* known as "La Tragedia de Heraclio Bernal."

It is not at all surprising that "The Monkey" should have favored the ballad about Heraclio Bernal, the most well-known "Robin Hood" figure of the *corrido* tradition. In 1877, at the age of 22, Bernal was accused, perhaps falsely, of stealing some bars of iron from a mining company in Guadalupe de los Reyes, Sinaloa. These probably were transformed poetically into the "bars of silver" referred to in stanza 2 of the *corrido* below. Bernal escaped, but was recaptured and jailed in Mazatlán. He was freed by General Ramírez Terrón, whom he joined, as second-in-

command, in an abortive uprising against the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz in 1879. From this time on, Heraclio Bernal always seems to have ridden at the head of a band that often exceeded one hundred men. He specialized in relieving wealthy mine owners of their silver, in making fools of local officials and succoring the poor and oppressed. Although the government always insisted that he was nothing more than a "common bandit," Bernal maintained the political character of his defiance of authority, issuing proclamations of revolt in 1885 and 1887. It was after the second of these, in 1887, that the government in Culiacán offered the exceptionally high reward of 10,000 pesos (@ 1 peso = 1 dollar) for his capture. As it always seems to happen with the so-called "social bandit," one of Bernal's erstwhile associates became "*cansado de andar*," which is to say "tired of trekking about, tired of life's

hard knocks,” and decided to accept the rich cash reward and betray “*el mero león de la sierra*” (“the one and only lion of the mountains”), as Bernal was known. *Corridos* may have been sung about Bernal’s exploits even while he was still alive, but upon his capture and death on January 5, 1888, all of his previous feats were incorporated into a series of ballads that focus on the treachery of his betrayer, Crispín García. Numerous versions of the “Tragedy of Bernal” have passed through the oral tradition, as well as printed broadsides, sound recordings (an interesting version, recorded by the Trío Nava in New York in 1921, can be heard on the Arhoolie box set of “The Mexican Revolution” – CD # 7041/4) and a series of three films featuring the ranchera stars Antonio Aguilar and Flor Silvestre made in 1957. The variant sung by Manuel [Matías] Fernández of the Gavilanes on this recording most resembles versions of

this *corrido* associated with the singer Luis Pérez Meza and the *mariachis* of the Plaza Garibaldi in Mexico City. It assumes that the listener knows all about Bernal, leaving out all of the references to his help for the poor or his political opposition to the Díaz dictatorship that are present in other versions, for instance, and concentrates exclusively on the betrayal. The circumstances of Bernal’s long career of “social banditry” are simplified and reduced to the alleged theft of “some bars of silver.” The town of Guadalupe de los Reyes, mentioned twice in this version of the *corrido*, is hidden in the mountains about 100 kilometers due north of Mazatlán near the Sinaloa-Durango state line, and remains to this day nearly as inaccessible as when it was one of the favorite haunts of the “Lion of the Mountains.”

Jaime Nicolopulos - 1991

TRANSLATIONS OF LYRICS

1. I Don't Buy Love

I'm low on cash, I can't buy your love,
And even if I were rich,
I wouldn't spend it on buying flowers.

Now you have someone who indulges all your
whims,
But when the day comes when he's broke,
You're going to do to him what you did to me.

I loved you, I adored you,
and now I only want to detest you,
Because you repaid my love with treachery,
I'll never again think about your love.

You sell yourself, I don't buy;
affection bought with money is no good
because the day there's no more money
that kind of love becomes someone else's.

Even if it were an act of penance,
I wouldn't pay a peso for your love;
let whoever wants to love me, love me,
just don't let them charge me for their kisses.

2. San Juan Huetamo

Oh, Beautiful San Juan Huetamo,
when the moon came out.

Cannon shots rang out when my love enlisted.
Row, sweetheart, row, row down to La Union.
I'm a soldier from Guerrero and I serve the nation,
so sing out!: “Long live the Federation!”

Santa Ana said in the port,
when he was getting ready to embark:
“You've said something that isn't true,
just so you'll stop talking,
I've left you all a dead rooster, so finish plucking it.”

4. Ballad of 'The Monkey'

I'm going to sing some verses,
but I almost can't sing for crying,
gentlemen, this is the ballad
of José Torres, “The Monkey.”

One day, March 17,
how could I ever forget?
Death was stalking in Palo Alto,
planning to carry him off.

They got the drop on “The Monkey,”
and this must not be forgotten,
“The Monkey,” very badly wounded,
almost suffering death's final agony,
was able to draw his pistol
and kill the other guy.

"The Monkey" was a great friend,
that no one can forget,
he hung out with everybody,
he was the most loyal of friends,
always asking the mariachi to play
The Tragedy of Bernal

No one knows exactly how the deed went down;
but he sent the other guy to Hell ahead of him
and he died satisfied.

I'm going to sing for you, friends,
with respect and pride.
"The Monkey" passed on into history,
let's respect his bravery,
shouting all together: "Long live 'The Monkey'!"

Fly on, fly away, little dove,
and land on that philodendron.
Gentlemen, this is the ballad
of José Torres, "The Monkey."

5. The Tragedy of Heraclio Bernal

Tune your guitar well, don't break a string,
so that you can accompany well the tragedy
of Bernal.

The tragedy of Bernal began in Guadalupe
over some bars of silver that they say he stole.

Heraclio Bernal said: "I'm not a cattle rustler,

I have stamped silver in Guadalupe de los Reyes."

In the state of Sinaloa, district of Culiacán,
they offered ten thousand pesos for the life of Bernal.
Crispín García said: "I'm tired of being poor,
if you give me ten thousand pesos, I'll bring you
Bernal."

They gave him the ten thousand pesos
and he wrapped them in his bandana.
He told the commander: "Get me some men ready."

They gave him some men, a squadron of soldiers,
to go up into the mountains where Bernal could
be found.

They went up into the mountains; Heraclio was
careless,
they bound him hand and foot,
but he still fled from them.

What is it that I see here spread out down the
highway?

They're rifles of the Eighteenth Battalion
that are bringing in Heraclio Bernal.

Fly away, fly on, little dove,
all the way down the highway,
now I've finished singing
the new ballad of Heraclio Bernal.

6. The Elegant Rancher

He's a rancher in the latest style,
he really likes to dress swell,
he wears a tie, sunglasses, cuff links, cashmere,
red sport coat, velvet, yellow trousers,
green plaid shirt
and his cowboy belt buckle.

The finest thing a rancher has:
a straw hat with hair sticking out on the sides.
He goes along eating popcorn,
and this nobody can deny him.

His sandals are the latest rage,
they have platform soles
and fancy buckles,
he says they're the best,
they have Cuban heels,
(with one kick, he killed a pig),
and what-is-more, they're of patent leather.
Ha, ha, ha. How elegant he is!

(This was one of the most requested novelty songs
of 1990, the year this recording was made.)

7. The Traffickers of Michoacán

Several pickups headed out,
heading out for California
—from Aguililla and El Aguaje
they leave before dawn—,

they were carrying a load
of opium and that evil weed.

In Coalcomán and Tepeque
everyone carries a good automatic pistol;
their brand new pickup trucks
are very nicely decked out
with the darkest tinted windows
so that no one can see in.

The roaring of submachine guns,
AR-15s and other arms is heard
from the ranches known as La Romera,
El Vejucio and El Cansangue,
Loma Blanca and Carapuato,
San Isidro and La Bocanda.

They have good parties, even if nothing is wrong,
they buy their brand new cars
and they don't care if they spend,
they say: "Get ready for next year,
let's plant another crop."

They pass through Apatzingán,
Nueva Italia and Uruapan
where there are leaders of the gang
who have it all organized
in Coalcomán and El Aguaje,
and there nobody knows anything about it.

Now with this I bid farewell,
please forgive the poor composition,
a mariachi that has pleased sang you this corrido,

the Mariachi Los Gavilanes [The Hawks],
from that well-known town of Oakland.

8. The Fig Trees

The fig trees in your patio give very nice shade,
so many would like to enjoy the shade there,
just so they could see you up close,
but they're nothing compared to me,
I've already kissed you on the mouth.

The friends your brothers bring around
have fired bullets at me,
they want to do away with me
so that you'll pay attention to them,
but they're nothing compared to me,
I've already held you in my arms.

I've been told that they go around saying
that my days are numbered,
if they forget that you love me,
I don't know what the problem is,
but they're nothing compared to me,
tell them that you've already given yourself to me.

Because you're the prettiest flower,
they called you "poppy blossom,"
you know that they envy us
because we see each other alone,
but they're nothing compared to me,
I handle a pistol real well.

10. When I Throw the Dice

Now there's no going back,
our great love has come to an end,
now, for sure, I've ripped from my breast
all that love, all that obsession.

I figured out that you aren't worth the trouble,
that you let everybody love you,
and if once you knew how to be good,
now you're just running around looking for pleasure.

You've already thrown the dice in your life,
and destiny decreed you'd lose,
you don't want to admit you're a loser,
but you'll know it real soon.

The road you have chosen,
I've been down it a thousand times, too,
just remember that I'm a man,
and a man doesn't lose like a woman.

You were happy in my arms, but in spite of how
much I loved you,
you preferred the caresses of any old Joe,
perhaps for a whim, spite or pleasure.

You're off, leaving me in tears,
my life is turning bitter, but love like yours is easy
to get;
deceiving women, there's plenty 'round here.

When I throw the dice in my life,
if destiny should decree that I lose,

I'll come looking for your kisses in the night
to lose myself along with you again.

For the time being I'll go on ahead,
I'm leaving without even saying good-bye,
just in case we see each other again
out there where neither of us is worth a damn.

11. For A Kiss

I live imprisoned in the jail of your soul,
sentenced, perhaps, for many years.
It's horrible to love with all one's heart
a lover who does one so much damage.

I've only stolen a single kiss from your lips,
and the laws punish those who steal;

I've robbed you, and now I'm your prisoner,
waiting for life's justice.

For a kiss, you purchased my love,
for a kiss, I lost my freedom.
Can't you see? It was you who committed the crime,
and I'm the one who has to pay for your
wickedness.

You exchanged your lies for my truths,
you swore to me a love you didn't feel;
Me, I naively believed in your falsehoods
and thought that you would never forget me.

Now you tell me that you never loved me,
now I live imprisoned in your breast,
and now you come, woman, to brush me off,
because you know how much I love you.



For our complete illustrated catalog of CDs, Cassettes, Videos & more, send \$3 to:
Arhoolie Catalog, 10341 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito, CA 94530, U.S.A.

To order by phone, call toll free:

1.888.ARHOOIE (1-888-274-6654)

Or visit our website at:

www.arhoolie.com

Mariachi los Gavilanes de Oakland



1. **No Compró Amores** (I Don't Buy Love) (Vals-Ranchera)
2. **San Juan Huetamo** (Son)
3. **Me Lo Dijo Mi Madre** (My Mother Told Me) (Vals-Ranchera)
4. **Corrido Del Mono** (Tragedia en Palo Alto) (Ballad of the Monkey) (The Tragedy in Palo Alto) (Corrido)
5. **Tragedia De Heraclio Bernal** (The Tragedy of Heraclio Bernal) (Corrido)
6. **El Ranchero Chido** (The Elegant Rancher) (Cumbia)
7. **Los Traficantes de Michoacán** (The Traffickers of Michoacán) (Corrido)
8. **Las Higueras** (The Fig Trees) (Ranchera)
9. **El Terrequeteque** (Son)
10. **Cuando Juegue El Albur** (When I Throw the Dice) (Vals-Ranchera)
11. **Por Un Beso** (For a Kiss) (Vals-Ranchera)
12. **Arriba Pichataro** (Son-Instrumental)

© & © 2005 by Arhoolie Productions, Inc.
10341 San Pablo Ave, El Cerrito, CA 94530
www.arhoolie.com



File Under: MEXICO-REGIONAL



0 96297 90502 9