

STEREO
FOLKWAYS RECORDS FD 6527

Saturday Night San Antonio

Tex-Mex Dance Music

With FRANK CORRALES, BEN TAVERA KING and the LOS FOLKEROS group



M
1629.7
T35
K52
T355
1982
v.1

MUSIC LP

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Ben Tavera King, Accordion; Frank Corrales, guitar and Los Folkeros Dance Group.

SIDE 1

- | | |
|---|------|
| 1. Mi Cafetal (cumbia) traditional | 2:25 |
| 2. Volver, volver (bolero) Fernando Maldonado | 2:43 |
| 3. Pan de Maiz (schotische) traditional | 1:20 |
| 4. Huapango Tejano (huapango) traditional | 1:35 |
| 5. Mi Negra Ausencia (danza) traditional | 2:15 |
| 6. La Adelita (polka) traditional | 1:30 |
| 7. La cucaracha (waltz) traditional | 0:55 |

SIDE 2

- | | |
|---|------|
| 1. Viva Seguin (polka) Santiago Jimenez Sr. | 2:40 |
| 2. Flor Marchita (schotische) Narcisco Martínez | 2:05 |
| 3. Danzon Juarez (danzon) traditional | 3:27 |
| 4. La Pledrera (polka) Santiago Jimenez | 1:55 |
| 5. La Tuna (waltz) Patricio Jimenez | 2:00 |
| 6. Cotula Polka (polka) Santiago Jimenez Sr. | 1:55 |
| 7. Saturday Night San Antonio-Sabado Noche en San Antonio (cumbia) traditional. | 2:22 |

LOS POLKEROS

Los Polkeros was formed to focus on a part of America's folk music tradition that until recently has been overlooked—Tex-Mex music.

The core of the group is guitarist Frank Corrales and button accordionist Ben Tavera King. Corralale has been recording Tex-Mex music for more than four decades, starting with such seminal groups as Conjunto Alamo and Conjunto Estrella.

During his youth he absorbed the music of such early Tex-Mex accordionists as Narcisco Martínez and Santiago Jimenez Sr.

During the 1950s the guitar lost out in popularity in the Tex-Mex music scene to the bajo-sexto, a type of large 12-string guitar that is limited to only playing chords. However, Corrales preserved the early Tex-Mex guitar style as he went on to master other Latin-influenced guitar styles. The Tex-Mex guitar style calls for the guitar to carry on a dialogue with the accordion by combining melody runs along with chords.

Ben Tavera King came to Tex-Mex music after establishing himself as a performer of various types of Hispanic folk music on the college circuit. During the mid 1970s he became interested in the older styles of Tex-Mex music, which were being played less and less often, because the audiences were listening to modern types of Mexican and American pop music.

To learn the older diatonic accordion styles he studied with Santiago Jimenez Jr. and Valerio Longorio.

In addition to studying with Tex-Mex accordion masters, King listened to the old 78 r.p.m. versions of the tunes that appear on this album.

After hearing an earlier album made by Corrales, King heard the same style of guitar playing he had been hearing on the old 78 r.p.m. records. Soon after the two musicians joined forces they were featured on a Public Broadcasting System program on Hispanic music and an English-made documentary on Tex-Mex music.

Recently Los Polkeros, which translates literally to "the guys who play polkas," has been performing at colleges and folk festivals throughout the Southwest and on the East Coast.

—Rafael Castillo

Credits:

Produced by: Ben Tavera King	Thank you: Vickie Davidson
Recorded by: The Dubby Hankins Studio, San Antonio, Texas	String bass: Dubby Hankins
Engineer: Dubby Hankins	Congas: Jorge Roque
Cover Photo: Michael Nye	Drums and percussion: John A. King
Booklet Drawing: Armando Montoya	Recorded: December 1981 and January 1982.

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San Antonio Saturday Night

With FRANK CORRALES, BEN TAVERA KING
and the LOS FOLKEROS group

Complete text & dance instructions inside pocket.

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The History of Tex-Mex Music

While Tex-Mex music is commonly thought of as the folk music that's popular along the Texas-Mexico border, ironically it knows no borders when it comes to musical influences

Several selections on this album reach back to Germany and Poland for their roots, while a rhythm like the cumbia goes back to Africa by way Colombia. Still another tune, like the huapango, will have its background firmly planted in Mexico.

The history of Tex-Mex music stretches back to the turn of the century when most of South Texas and Northern Mexico was largely unpopulated except for an occasional ranch or farming community. Consequently the area had no true tradition of folk music to call its own. However, this situation started changing radically on both sides of the border by 1910. Several mines started opening in the Northern Mexico states of Nuevo Leon, Chihuahua and Coahuila. With the opening of the foreign-owned mines, came engineers and supervisors from Central European countries such as Germany, Austria and Poland. With them they brought the button accordion and its European repertoire of of polkas, waltzes, schotisches and mazurkas.

"From the salons and parties where polkas and other rhythms were played by the European immigrants it wasn't long before the music passed out onto the streets and was picked up by the Mexicans who were working in the mines and on the petroleum projects," writes Jas Reuter in "The Popular Music of Mexico."

At the same time European engineers were bringing their music to Northern Mexico, the same polka and waltz rhythms were working their way into the fabric of South Texas' music. It was brought to the area by several colonies of German and Polish farmers who settled throughout South Texas.

Santiago Jimenez Sr., a San Antonio native, who was one of the first accordionists to record Tex-Mex music during the 1930s explains:

"My father Patricio taught me how to play the accordion. He started playing the single-row button accordion around 1910. He would go over to New Braunfels (a German settlement near San Antonio) and stand outside where the Germans were having their dances and listen to their polkas and what have you. Then he'd come back home figure out how to play them on his accordion.

"When I started playing I learned the polkas he heard from the Germans and later started writing my own."

During the 1930s Tex-Mex music started spreading throughout the Southwest United States through the recordings made by Santiago Jimenez Sr. and Narcisco Martinez, who was based in the Rio Grande Valley.

By the late 1940s Tex-Mex musicians were using the three-row diatonic accordion which allowed them more freedom and let them incorporate other musical styles into their repertoire.

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One of these outside influences was "tropical music" which consists of the slow, romantic boleros from Cuba and the highly danceable cumbias, which developed from rhythms popularized throughout Latin America by black Colombians.

The variety of influences ranging from Central European to Colombian have come together to make up the Tex-Mex repertoire. A traditional group or conjunto, as they are known in Spanish, consists of button accordion, guitar, bass and sometimes drums.

That lineup became particularly popular during the 1950s throughout the Southwest as more Spanish-language radio stations started broadcasting the music.

It's also become a traditional part of Mexican-American life since the music is featured regularly in neighborhood bars as well as larger dance halls, that can hold several thousand people.

This album gives you a taste of what you'd hear stepping into one of those dance halls on a Saturday night in San Antonio.

Dance Steps Accompanying the Traditional Music performed on "Saturday Night San Antonio"

1. "Mi Cafetal" 2:25 (cumbia) This is one of the first cumbias to become popular in South Texas during the 1940s. It is a traditional melody that was originally developed in Colombia.

The cumbia traditionally starts with dancers forming a large circle which moves in a counterclockwise motion. The couples stand side by side with the man on the outside. The man and woman are usually about six inches apart.

All of the cumbia steps are based on the dancers taking sliding steps forwards by putting their weight on the front half of their foot.

As the foot slides forward the dancers should let their hips rock backwards slightly while holding their arms to their side with the forearms pointing forward in an exaggerated walking motion.

One of the variations of the cumbia danced to "Mi Cafetal" calls for the dancing couples to take three sliding steps forward while they are side by side and then on the fourth step turn toward each other at a 90 degree angle for one step before repeating the process with three more sliding steps.

2. "Volver, Volver" 2:43 (bolero) This is a variation of a popular Mexican song set in bolero rhythm.

In this dance the couple faces each other in the traditional waltz position.

Initially the man will take three steps forward while the woman follows him taking three steps backward. On the third step there is a slight pause as the woman places the toe of her right shoe behind the heel of her left shoe. Then, as in the cumbia, the process is repeated every three steps as the couples move around in a counterclockwise circle around the dance floor.

3. "Pan de Maiz" 1:20 (schotische) This tune shows the close relationship between German and early Tex-Mex music. This piece worked its way into the Tex-Mex repertoire through Patricio Jimenez, the father of Santiago Jimenez Sr., who learned it from German Americans during the early 1900s. In English, the piece is traditionally known as "Put Your Little Foot Out."

To start the schotische couples face each other holding hands in the traditional waltz position, but with their faces cheek to cheek. Then the dancers bend their bodies from the waist and on the fourth count of the tune take one step with the left foot, then on the second count take a step with the right foot then on the next count take a

hop forward leading with the left foot. Dancers repeat the process as they go around the dance floor in a counterclockwise motion. Since the schotische is a four count dance there is a slight pause on the fourth, and final, count of each cycle.

4. "Huapango Tejano" 1:35 (Huapango) The huapango originated in the state of Veracruz and traveled up Mexico's east coast through the state of Tamaulipas and into South Texas. Along the way the instrumentation changed from the harp to the accordion and guitar music of South Texas and Northern Mexico. The dance borrows some of its rapid heel movements from flamenco dancing to get its distinctive percussive feel.

To begin the huapango couples form a circle with the couples standing side by side. The men and women stand about six inches from each other's sides. The men and women hold their hands behind them at belt level, with one hand holding the wrist of the other hand.

Following the first three counts of the huapango the couples simultaneously slide forward on the toe of the left foot and strike the floor with the heel of the left foot. Then the right foot slides forward and the dancer strikes the floor with the heel of his right foot twice and then three times in rapid succession emphasizing the beat of the music. The steps are repeated as the couples move around the dance floor in a counterclockwise motion.

5. "Mi Negra Ausencia" 2:15 (danza) This rhythm shares its roots with the habanera which originated in Cuba and traveled to Argentina to become the tango. It became known as the danza in South Texas. For the most part the dance is rarely danced in modern Tex-Mex halls, but it is kept alive by the older couples.

To start a danza couples face each other in the traditional waltz position, except the arms which are usually held by the side with

the hands pointing up are held at a right angle. Beginning with the left foot the couple does an exaggerated slide step followed by a similar step with the right foot. Then the couple takes another slide step with the left foot, but makes it only half as long as the first step in the dance. That step is followed by a similar step with the left foot which completes the cycle. Dancers in a dance hall situation have the option of either following these steps in a counterclockwise circle or going back and forth as they change the direction of their steps at the end of every four counts.

6. "La Adelita" 1:30 (polka) This is an all-purpose tune that started out as a march for Pancho Villa's Division of the North during the Mexican Revolution of 1910 to 1923. The tune came to Texas with Mexican immigrants who came to Texas during and after the revolution. It remains a popular dance tune in South Texas dance halls.

To dance a traditional Mexican polka couples begin in the traditional waltz position and start with a small hop with the right foot. On the second count dancers take a step with the left foot followed by a similar step with the right foot bringing it to the side of the left foot. Then the couple takes another step with their left feet and wait two counts and begin the process again as it goes in the traditional circle around the dance floor.

7. "La Cucaracha" :55 (waltz) This is another tune that came north of the border following the Mexican revolution. Though it's in the traditional three-four waltz rhythm, "La Cucaracha" is danced at a quicker paces than most waltzes. This dance used the brush step which means a toe or heel that is brushed is one that is dragged or pushed along the floor for a short distance before being picked up.

The dance starts with couples in the waltz position and simultaneously

talking a right brush step followed by a similar brush left step and another brush right step.

Then the dancers turn right in place and do a right, left, right and left steps.

Then the dancers turn left, while standing in place, and then do a right, left, right and left steps. The sequence is repeated as the dancers move around the dance floor.

SIDE II

1. "Viva Seguin" 2:40 (polka Tejano) Rarely a night goes by in a Tex-Mex dance hall goes by without this polka being performed. It was written during the 1930s by Santiago Jimenez Sr. It's named after Seguin, a small town near San Antonio, where the dancers were particularly receptive to his music.

"Viva Seguin" is often danced in a style known as "el estilo tacuachito" which literally translated means possum style. The name evolved as a descriptive term for the way dancers bend toward each other from the waist and stick out their backsides.

And while the basic polka step is used the traditional hop is omitted and the emphasis is put on getting a very smooth feel as dancers go around in the traditional counterclockwise circle. This style of polka was developed by second-generation Mexican Americans, who sometimes referred to themselves as pachucos.

To begin the dance couples assume the tacuachito pose and on the first count take a step with the right foot followed by a step with the left foot. Then the right foot is brought next to the left then a step is taken with the left foot. The process is repeated as dancers move in a counterclockwise circle around the dance floor.

2. "Flor Marchita" 2:05 (schotische) This schotische by legendary Tex-Mex accordionist Narcisco Martinez is another example of the Eastern-European influence on Tex-Mex music. During the 1920s and '30s Martinez says he was often hired by Polish immigrants to play solo at their dances. This particular piece bears a strong resemblance to several Polish schotisches.

To start the schotische couples face each other holding hands in the traditional waltz position. Then the dancers bend their bodies from the waist and on the down beat take one step forward with the left foot, then on the second count take a step with the right foot then on the next count take a small hop forward leading with the left foot. Repeat this process going counterclockwise around the dance floor.

3. "Danzon Juarez" 3:27 (danzon) The melody for this tune goes back to the 1850s in Mexico when it was used in a march. During the 1920s, however, the melody was put to the Cuban danzon rhythm.

This danzon is danced in two parts which follow the tune's changing rhythms.

The first part of the tune is danced as a traditional bolero with couples facing each other. The man takes three steps forward while the woman follows him taking three steps backward, as they hold each other in the traditional waltz position. On the third step there is a slight pause as the woman places the toe of her right shoe behind the heel of her left shoe.

Midway through the danzon, the beat speeds up (as the maracas and claves are heard) and the couples separate and begin dancing cumbia steps as described on "Mi Cafetal," the first tune on side one.

4. "La Piedrera" 1:55 (polka) This is a classic Tex-Mex polka by

Santiago Jimenez Sr. The polka's name, which means the stone worker, came from one of the early Mexican American neighborhoods in San Antonio which grew up around a stone quarry.

The dance steps that accompany this melody start with couples in the waltz position and beginning with a hop on the right foot, followed by a step with the left foot and then the right foot is brought next to the left foot and a step is taken with the left foot.

5. "La Tuna" 2:00 (waltz) This is one of the earliest known Tex-Mex pieces. It was written during the early 1900s by Patricio Jimenez, the father of Santiago Jimenez Sr. It was popular during the house parties which were the predecessors of today's large public dances.

It is danced as a traditional waltz. It starts with couples holding each other in the traditional waltz position. It begins with a smooth step with the right foot followed by the left foot and then both feet are brought together. The waltz can be danced in any direction and with or without couples turning.

6. "Cotula" 1:55 (polka) This is a nearly forgotten polka by Santiago Jimenez Sr.

It can be danced as a heel and toe polka which starts with couples facing each other in the traditional waltz position. The first step is a hop on the right foot, then the left foot is brought toward

the right foot with it touching the heel diagonally forward and with the toe pointed up. Then the step is repeated again before going into the traditional polka steps described for "La Piedrera."

7. "Saturday Night San Antonio" 2:22 (cumbia) This particular cumbia reflects the more modern sound of Tex-Mex music which borrows some jazz influences on both the accordion and guitar parts.

This piece is danced as a traditional cumbia with dancers forming up in a large circle as described on "Mi Cafetal."

The cumbia steps are based on sliding steps where dancers put their weight on the front half of their foot. To get a little bit fancy dancers can alternately touch their elbows with their hands as they move forward.

Couples start the dance by taking three sliding steps forward while side by side and on the fourth step turn toward each other at a 90 degree angle for one step before repeating the process with three more sliding steps.