

LORENZO MARTINEZ



Tecando

y

Cantando

LORENZO MARTINEZ Y SUS VIOLINES: TOCANDO Y CANTANDO¹

This second collection of "Lo Mejor de Lorenzo Martinez Y Sus Violines" continues the exploration, begun in the first volume,² of the wide range of musical expressions which constitute New Mexican Hispanic instrumental folk music tradition. It also demonstrates, to a degree even greater than the previous compilation, Lorenzo's varied and extensive repertoire and stylistic range. The previous volume featured mainly folk and popular instrumental pieces from the many sources that contribute to New Mexican Hispanic musical tradition. The present collection consists of less well-known traditional items as well as Lorenzo's original compositions, all of which form a significant part of the repertoire of one unique, eclectic, individualistic and very influential performer.

Lorenzo enjoys a well-deserved reputation as a traditional Hispanic violinist. He is probably the best known performer and preserver of New Mexican traditional social dance music ("**la musica de los bailes**"), as demonstrated in his earliest recordings, particularly **El Redondo Largo**³. Also, he is well known for his long-time association with various **mariachi** groups from throughout Mexico and the Southwestern United States. Among professional musicians in Mexico and the Southwestern United States, he is also known as a multi-instrumentalist, vocalist, composer, arranger, and record producer of enormous talent and incredible versatility. It is these talents which this recording documents and demonstrates, talents that are not quite as well known to the public at large as is his violin-playing ability.

LORENZO'S CAREER

Lorenzo's career has been quite extensive and varied. He began classical violin studies at a very young age, and also began to learn the New Mexico-Southern Colorado violin tradition in which he was to specialize. From his earliest years, he was introduced to and immersed into the vocal and instrumental traditions of his cultural group by his parents and grandparents. These experiences are celebrated in "Que Viva Mi Gente" on this recording. He also began to perform in public at a very early age. His extensive performing experiences, along with eclectic tastes and wide-ranging interests and abilities, have provided him with opportunities to perform with many celebrities in many areas of show business.

At the age of six he performed with his father's group, which performed at the Albuquerque Civic Auditorium as the opening act for the Bob Hope Show. When he was around fourteen or fifteen he played electric violin with the backup group for the best known entertainer in all of New Mexican popular music, Al Hurricane. While performing with this group at Albuquerque's Far West Club, he backed up a six or seven year old boy who, along with his family, was passing through on his way to establish a career in Los Angeles. This youngster, who had not yet begun to sing, but who was already an accomplished dancer, was Michael Jackson.

In 1970, along with his sisters Roberta and Doris, Lorenzo formed a trio, "Los Chamacos". This group was recorded under the name "Esperanza Encantada" by Alan Kline, former producer of the Beatles. On this recording, they were accompanied by a backup group known as "MUDD" whose drummer, Randy Castillo, now is a member of the Ozzy Osborn group. Over the years, Lorenzo has played for a very wide range of singers, actors and dancers, including Freddie Fender, The Beach Boys, Bette Davis, Ernest Borgnine, Robert Redford, Al Pacino, Phil Donahue, Melanie Griffith, Victoria Principal, Tina Louise, Bill Dailey, Eric Estrada and Joyce DeWitt. Over the years, he has played with groups in Albuquerque, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Guadalajara and Mexico City.

Lorenzo's major performing experience, however, has come from two main sources. He has been a long-time member of **Los Reyes de Albuquerque**, a group founded and led by his father, Roberto Martinez. This group is, by far, one of the most influential and

widely recognized ensembles in New Mexican traditional and popular music. Over a thirty-year performing career, they have become widely recognized as the most important ensemble currently active in the presentation, preservation and perpetuation of New Mexican Hispanic traditional music. This group is also well known for its emphasis on presenting the entire range of sources of New Mexican Hispanic musical expression - Spanish, Mexican, Anglo-American, Native American and African American - and combining them into a uniquely individualistic and typically New Mexican whole. Although Lorenzo was not a founding member of the group, he was an integral part of the group during their most active, creative period. As such, he was responsible for establishing the folk, violinistic character of this group's "classic" phase. Also, his continuing influence is clearly apparent; his students and former students continue his work with **Los Reyes**.

Lorenzo also has very extensive performing experience with a number of mariachi groups, both in the United States and in Mexico. Around 1974, he spent a year working with various mariachi groups at the Plaza Garibaldi (or "Plaza de Mariachis") in Mexico City. At that time he played with **Mariachi Los Mensajeros**, a group which accompanied one of the most famous and most beloved of all Mexican popular singers, the legendary **bolero** and **ranchera** singer, Javier Solis. In 1976, Lorenzo joined the **Mariachi San Miguel**, the official accompanying group which accompanied the equally legendary Antonio Aguilar, his wife Flor Silvestre, and their sons Pepe Aguilar and Antonio Aguilar, Jr. This group toured throughout the world as a part of the Antonio Aguilar family's "International Mexican Rodeo". While with this organization, Lorenzo spent two months playing two shows daily at Palacio de Deportes in Mexico City, playing to capacity audiences of 35,000 persons at each show.

In 1978, he played with a mariachi group in Guadalajara, **Mariachi Los Tecolotes**. The lead violinist of that group was Jose "Pepe" Martinez, who was later to become the leader of the most famous of all mariachi groups in the world, the **Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlan**. Over the years, in addition to the Antonio Aguilar family and Javier Solis, Lorenzo has performed with mariachi groups which have accompanied some of the best known singers in Mexico and the Southwest, including Yolanda del Rio, Lucha Villa, Gerardo Reyes, Chelo, Aida Cuevas, Beatriz Adriana and Little Joe Hernandez, among others. For many years, Lorenzo was a mainstay of **The Mariachi Tenampa** of Albuquerque. With this group, Lorenzo made significant contributions as a violinist,

vocalist and arranger. Through these associations, Lorenzo has remained on the cutting edge of the newest developments in the Mexican and American mariachi world, an area of musical activity which is becoming one of the most dynamic and challenging areas of traditional and popular music in the United States and throughout the world.

NOTES ON THE SELECTIONS

As with all of Lorenzo's recordings, this collection is heavily oriented toward traditional material from many sources which make up New Mexican Hispanic traditional music. A large part of the recording showcases Lorenzo's violin-playing talents on the material for which he is most noted: the New Mexican social dance music ("**bailes**") tradition. This includes the "Quadrilla" and "Cuna Numero Dos", as well as the traditional New Mexican Hispanic wedding march, "La Marcha". The complete set of six "Quadrillas", New Mexican colonial Hispanic society's version of the square dance or Virginia reel, is a featured part of this collection, and it starts off this recording.⁴ One of Lorenzo's original compositions, "Polka Alegre" demonstrates his compositional abilities in the instrumental tradition for which he is best known. It also demonstrates the continuing vitality of the New Mexican Hispanic social dance tradition, the fact that new pieces continue to be composed in the traditional style, and to be accepted into or rejected from that tradition, depending on their fit with the folk group's aesthetic standards.

The recording also contains instrumental pieces from the Mexican **mariachi** repertoire, such as "Jesusita en Chihuahua" and "Mexico en Polka", as well as the Mexican **salon** tradition, represented by the well-known **vals** (waltz) by Juventino Rosas, "Sobre las Olas" (known in its English translation as "Over the Waves"). Lorenzo's vocal talents are demonstrated in selections from the Mexican **cancion ranchera** tradition, such as "Los Laureles", as well as in more contemporary **rancheras** such as "Quiero Que Sepas".

Lorenzo's compositional abilities in genres other than the "**baile**" tradition are amply demonstrated on this collection by his vocal compositions "Mis Abuelos", "Que Viva Mi Gente", "La Mujer Que Yo Quiero", "Que Ay Amigo", and "Las Mañanitas Chicanas". (The first three demonstrate his affection for his family, particularly his grandparents, parents and wife.) The other compositions, including his arrangement of the Beatles' "Yesterday" ("Ayer"), demonstrate and document his arranging ability. "Un Besito Mas"

also shows forth his linguistic ability; originally an English-language song, Lorenzo composed new Spanish lyrics. (Similarly, Lorenzo's father, Roberto, composed new Spanish lyrics for "Blackland Farmer".)

Lorenzo's multifaceted instrumental talents are evident throughout the recording. His abilities as a violinist are well documented; on this recording, as on all of his "bailes" recordings, he plays all the violin parts through the multi-tracking process. His prowess on other instruments is less generally known. That situation is rectified on this recording. Also through multi-tracking, he can be heard playing guitarron, electric bass, mandolin, and guitar on various selections throughout the recording. In fact, on most of the selections on this recording, Lorenzo plays all of the instruments heard!

In a relatively short time, Lorenzo Martinez has led a remarkably active career and has made a considerable impact on Southwestern Hispanic musical life. Two double albums of his "greatest hits" attest to the contribution he has made thus far. He is now in the prime of his career, and shows every sign of continuing in all of the avenues in which he has excelled up to this time. These two albums demonstrate his accomplishments to date, and point the way toward many more significant contributions to come in the future.

James K. Leger
New Mexico Highlands University

1. I wish to thank the Martinez family -- especially Lorenzo's father, Roberto Martinez - for providing the factual information concerning Lorenzo's life and career which are referred to in these notes.
2. Lo Mejor de Lorenzo Martinez y Sus Violins, M.O.R.E. CD MO 0823
3. M.O.R.E. LP 8027
4. For more information regarding the New Mexican Hispanic social dance tradition in general, and the "Quadrillas" in particular, see my liner notes to Lorenzo Martinez y Los Reyes de Albuquerque: Musica Antigua.

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LORENZO MARTINEZ Tocando Y Cantando

Las Quadrillas	
1. Entrada	1:59
2. Polka	2:14
3. Mano Derecha	2:03
4. Arco	2:02
5. Polka Crusada	2:30
6. Cutilio	2:23

7. Sobre Las Olas	3:52
8. La Marcha	2:39
9. Quadrilla	2:01
10. Polka Alegre (Lorenzo Martinez)	2:24
11. Ayer/Yesterday	3:01
12. Mi Ramoncita (Roberto Martinez)	1:54
13. Homenaje A Mis Abuelos (Lorenzo Martinez)	2:34
14. Que Viva Mi Gente (Lorenzo Martinez)	2:57
15. La Mujer Que Yo Quiero (Lorenzo Martinez)	2:30
16. Que Ay Amigo (Lorenzo Martinez)	2:26
17. Las Mañanitas Chicanas (Lorenzo Martinez)	2:57
18. Un Besito Mas	2:39
19. Mexico En Polka	2:15
20. La Cuna Numero Dos	1:35
21. Jesusita En Chihuahua	2:18
22. Me Caiste Del Cielo	2:37
23. Quiero Que Sepas	2:05
24. Blackland Farmer (Roberto Martinez)	2:09
25. Los Laureles	2:39



LORENZO MARTINEZ

Tocando Y Cantando

LORENZO MARTINEZ is nationally recognized as a master folk violinist and outstanding mariachi musician. However, very few people are aware that he is also an accomplished composer and vocalist. In this compact disc, consisting of 25 selections, you will experience Lorenzo at his best in all three categories. You will get the opportunity to dance to his moving violin instrumentals and savor the nostalgic compositions about the joys and happiness of fulfilled love and accomplishments, and the sadness and disappointment of unrequited love or the loss of a loved one. He sings these songs in a rich and vibrant voice that we think you will thoroughly enjoy.

Descriptive notes by James Leger

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Produced by Los Reyes de Alburquerque Foundation

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