



TAQUACHITO NIGHTS

CONJUNTO MUSIC FROM SOUTH TEXAS



Smithsonian Folkways Recordings

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Joe Lopez



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Produced in collaboration with the Narciso Martínez Cultural Arts Center, with the support of the Harlingen Area Chamber of Commerce

Recorded live at the 1998 *16 de Septiembre* Conjunto Festival of the Narciso Martínez Cultural Arts Center in San Benito, Texas, these powerful recordings reveal the historical roots of conjunto and show new directions taken by some conjunto bands today. This lively dance music, played by some of conjunto's best-known performers, features accordions, *bajo sexto* and stirring vocals. 71 minutes, 36 page booklet with English translations of Spanish song texts, photographs, maps.

1 EL BURRO PARDO

Gilberto Pérez y sus Compadres 2:33

2 LA SICODELICA

Ernesto Guerra y su Conjunto 2:40

3 EL SINALOENCE

Mingo Saldívar y sus Tremendos Cuatro Espadas 4:06

4 EL PORRON

Ricardo Guzmán y Los Tres Aces 1:50

5 BAJO SEXTO Y ACCORDION

Freddy González y Los Super Unidos 3:27

6 JUAREZ

Los Brillantes de Martín Zapata 3:38

7 EL CHUECO

Los Fantasmas del Valle 3:52

8 NOCHE DE AMORES

Valerio Longoria y su Conjunto 3:44

9 EL SENDERITO

Amadeo Flores y su Conjunto 2:00

10 MALDITO VICIO

Joe Ramos y Ellos 3:56

11 ATOTONILCO

Tony de la Rosa y su Conjunto 4:21

12 CREI

Freddy González y Los Super Unidos 4:12

13 CALLE DIEZ Y SIETE

Ernesto Guerra y su Conjunto 3:30

14 BELLOS RECUERDOS

Los Fantasmas del Valle 4:18

15 SKOKIE

Amadeo Flores y su Conjunto 3:07

16 TRES FLORES

Ricardo Guzmán y Los Tres Aces 2:32

17 ARRANCATE

Conjunto Aztlan 3:21

18 LOS LAURELES

Los Rieles Express de San Benito 4:07

19 EL COCO RAYADO

Rubén Vela y su Conjunto 6:24



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About the Cover Image

"*Taquachito Night*" by Joe López. López was born and raised in San Antonio, Texas. His paintings reflect his pride in the Mexican/Chicano culture, childhood memories, and cultural foundations. In this watercolor painting, he shows his love of conjunto music and dancing. He describes these images as typical of the common man getting down to the raw conjunto sounds of accordion and *bajo sexto* on a Saturday night—a *taquachito* night.

Tacuachito means "little opossum" in Spanish and originates from a Náhuatl word. In the text it is spelled in standard Spanish as "*tacuachito*," and the title has the regional spelling, "*taquachito*." The word is associated with conjunto music and a unique dance style. Once a derogatory term referring to working-class music and dance, it has gained new meaning, as conjunto music becomes increasingly popular.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE RECORDING

by Dan Sheehy, Ethnomusicologist

The last quarter of the 20th century saw Texas-Mexican conjunto music take its place as a major icon of regional American identity. Working-class *mexicanos* of the Rio Grande Valley played it, wrote new compositions, and danced to its rhythms for a half century before, but the music was little known beyond that region or social group until later. The diversification of popular musical tastes beginning in the 1960s, Chicano activism, outmigration of Tejanos to other parts of the country, and attention from recording companies, the Grammy awards, filmmakers, folk festivals, foundations, and concert venues have taken the conjunto and its music far from South Texas. Heightened cultural self-awareness among Tejano conjunto devotees has sparked events such as the Narciso Martínez Cultural Arts Center's Conjunto Festival, which showcases the best of the living conjunto heritage. This recording of artists presented by the Center offers an aural "family portrait" across several generations of today's keepers of the conjunto tradition.

TAQUACHITO NIGHTS CONJUNTO MUSIC FROM SOUTH TEXAS

by David Champion, Ramón de León,
and Cynthia L. Vidaurri

Social Context of Conjunto Music

On any weekend in communities throughout South Texas, sounds of conjunto music emanate from bars and dance halls such as La Villita, El Flamingo, or Club 77, and community halls of the V.F.W. or Knights of Columbus. This accordion-driven musical tradition originated and survives in a once-isolated area of the Lower Rio Grande Valley, across the river from Mexico. It is known to locals simply as El Valle. Conjunto is a music played at community events which serve to mark rites of passage such as weddings, *quinceañeras* (female coming-of-age ceremonies), graduation dances, and funerals. "Pay" dances, which are essentially income-generating events, remind and reaffirm for members of the community who they are and from where they came.

For the most part, conjunto music is a private music—heard only by a community of people that share a common history and experiences. This community of mostly Texas Mexican Americans live in a part of the United States that was once occupied by Native Americans, then settled by Spain in the 16th century, and later became Mexico. This historical legacy is palpable, and its influence infuses all the region's culture.

During the early part of the 20th century, South Texas was characterized by the growth of large-

scaled agribusiness. A large army of workers was needed to harvest the region's crops. Most of these workers were Mexican Americans, but there were some African Americans and Anglos. The workers followed the harvest cycles, starting in South Texas and working their way through the fields in the Midwest and beyond. Caravans of workers moved from site to site, setting up temporary homes in migrant labor camps. On Friday and Saturday nights, farm workers would take a few hours to relax and socialize. Conjunto music was an integral part of migrant worker culture. It was an available and affordable entertainment source. This music was the "social glue" of the community and was part of its life cycle.

For some farm workers, musical skills provided a way out of the fields. Many musicians could earn more money playing music than picking cotton, and, of course, the work was not so back-breaking. On a good day, a musician could earn \$2.00–\$4.00 for playing 6–7 hours. Musicians followed the farm workers on their yearly migration. The more developed camps sometimes had areas where dances could be held, but more often music was played in makeshift settings. Dance floors were crafted by packing down earth with a combination of ashes and water. More permanent dance areas called *plataformas* (platforms) were sometimes constructed by entrepreneurial individuals.

The relationship between farm workers and conjunto music is inextricable. A conjunto band's financial success was greatly dependent on farm workers. As their primary audience, musicians

depended on farm workers to pay admissions to dances and purchase recordings with their limited financial resources. National Endowment for the Arts Heritage award winner Tony de la Rosa credits his success to the migrant workers who supported him in good times and in bad. Today, the numbers of migrant workers have greatly diminished, replaced by machine harvesting, but the circuits established by the harvest cycles remain the circuits played by most conjunto groups.

Until recently, this strong connection between conjunto music and audience did not extend to all Mexican Americans. In short, conjunto music was for *la gente pobre* (poor people), and orchestra music was for *los jaitones* ("high-toned" people, middle class.) It would take a social movement and a demographic shift to reconcile the middle class with this music.

Like other groups in the Civil Rights era of the 1960s and 1970s, Mexican Americans questioned their status as American citizens. The resulting Chicano Movement included diverse issues that affected Mexican Americans throughout the country, such as the Vietnam War, farm worker rights, access to quality education, employment practices, segregation, and access to political and economic structures. Several expressive forms surfaced in this politically active environment. Many of the political and social issues were addressed through theater and music. One of the best known of these artistic venues was Teatro Campesino, which worked with César Chávez and the United Farm Workers'

movement. Likewise, conjunto music became transformed into a powerful cultural icon and a tool for creating a collective awareness. Groups such as Conjunto Aztlan combined this traditional musical expression with contemporary issues by composing original songs and adapting new lyrics to old melodies.

In the wake of the Chicano Movement, Mexican Americans gained greater access to political, economic, and educational institutions. With their improved socio-economic status, many middle-class Mexican Americans were freer to embrace their cultural traditions publicly.

Evolution of Conjunto Music

The Spanish word *conjunto* refers to both a musical style and to a group of musicians that play that music. The music is often referred to by various terms including *conjunto regional* (regional conjunto), *música de bajo sexto y acordeón* (bajo sexto and accordion music), *música tejana* (Texas music), and *Tejano*. This last term should not be confused with the contemporary use of *Tejano*, which refers to the highly orchestrated Tex-Mex sound currently enjoying great popularity. Conjunto musicians make a point of saying they play the "original Tejano" music. It is also unlike its Mexican counterpart, *norteño*, which differs in instrumentation and repertoire. It is important to note that *corridos* (ballads), commonly associated with Mexican traditional music, are not a major part of the conjunto repertoire, although they are sometimes included when set to a polka beat. Some musicians made a point of saying that *cor-*

ridos, especially the more recent *narco-corridos* that sing praises to 20th-century outlaws, are not what conjuntos sing about, nor do they want to be associated with the themes they portray.

Conjunto has endured changes in instrumentation, but its mainstay is the diatonic button accordion accompanied by the *bajo sexto* (a double-coursed, 12-string bass guitar). Most contemporary conjuntos include a bass guitar and drums, with other instruments occasionally added. The earliest musical groups on ranches and farms consisted of an accordion, guitar, and either a violin, *tololoche* (contrabass), or *tambora de rancho* (ranch drum). Sheep and goat skins were used to cover opposite sides of these drums to produce different sounds. The *tambora de rancho* was eventually replaced by the *bajo sexto*, and the electric bass has replaced the *tololoche*.

Conjunto has been influenced by music from many nations. Building on traditions such as the German polka and schottische and Mexican *norteño* music, Tejano conjunto musicians modified the music into a genre that was regionally distinct and uniquely American. They borrowed selectively from other musical traditions and contributed their own innovations. The accordion was possibly introduced to Mexico by European immigrants in the 19th century. Likewise, various musical styles such as the redowa, schottische, mazurka, and polka were imported from Europe and enjoyed great popularity in northern Mexico. The accordion surfaced in Texas-Mexican music sometime between the 1850s

did not evolve until the 1930s.

South Texas farm workers in the Midwest missed conjunto music. Conjunto musician Amadeo Flores recalls, "Mexicanos in the Midwest went anywhere they could find a polka beat to dance to." Here they encountered other varieties of polka: German, Polish, Czech, Slovenian. The subtle changes in conjunto music reflect the influences of these excursions. The most dramatic changes occurred in association with World War II, when Valley residents ventured out to other areas of the world in the armed forces.

Other external influences on conjunto include musicians such as Spike Jones, who inspired Tony de la Rosa to incorporate a washboard sound replicated by the snare drums. De la Rosa also took Red Foley's "Alabama Jubilee" and with Amadeo Flores on *bajo sexto* created a polka called "*El Circo*" (The Circus). Ernesto Guerra identifies several tunes, such as "Misty," "Mexicali Rose," "Beer Barrel Polka," and "Lucille," as some of the many popular tunes that have been converted into danceable conjunto music.

This music is transmitted from teacher to student through one-to-one exchanges in a private setting. Given that sheet music for the button accordion and *bajo sexto* is still non-existent, this approach continues. Experienced musicians easily integrate another musician's innovations into their repertoires after hearing them only once.

The introduction of amplification greatly changed

conjuntos. By the early to mid-1950s musicians such as Tony de la Rosa were using amplifiers for the *bajo sexto*, bass, and vocals. Conjuntos were now able to play larger dance halls that had previously been orchestra territory. These larger venues provided access to a larger audience and consequently wider exposure.

Most conjunto music is recorded in locally owned recording studios and distributed regionally through "mom-and-pop" retail outlets, and by the musicians themselves during public performances. During the 1930s and early 1940s this music captured the attention of such prestigious recording labels as Columbia, Decca, and RCA Bluebird. This was short-lived, and after World War II the companies did not return. Local entrepreneurs such as Armando Marroquín of Ideal Records and Arnaldo Ramírez, Sr. of Falcón Records picked up where the major labels left off and continued recording conjunto artists up until the late 1960s. During the early 1990s a few traditional conjuntos such as Los Dos Gilbertos and Gilberto Pérez y sus Compadres were recorded by the major labels. Companies such as Sony, Capitol EMI, and Columbia entered the arena—partly in response to the emerging Tejano scene. Like the experience of the 1930s and 1940s, the interest of the large companies was short-lived, and eventually the music was once again relegated to being recorded at the local level. Today only a handful of companies record and distribute this music. It mostly falls to the individual musician to record, promote, and distribute his product.

Radio has been one of the principal vehicles for disseminating this music to large audiences, having been for years the primary source of entertainment. Pioneering Spanish-language broadcasters such as José Cantú, Martín Rosales, and Jesús "Chuy" de León—"El Gallito Madrugador"—achieved great prominence, perhaps even as much as the musicians, despite sporadic and limited programming, in some cases only 2–3 hours a day. In the late 1960s and early 1970s radio stations started broadcasting 24 hours a day in Spanish. The music they programmed was conjunto. Conjunto musicians would perform "live" in the studio as early as 5:00 a.m. Today locally owned radio stations that once programmed strictly conjunto are being absorbed by commercial conglomerates that focus on Tejano music. Conjunto musicians are once again being challenged to create new avenues for getting their music out to the public.

This discussion has focused exclusively on conjunto development in the Lower Río Grande Valley, but a parallel conjunto development surfaced in the 1930s in San Antonio. Figureheads such as Santiago Jiménez, Sr., father of conjunto artist Flaco Jiménez, and Willie Zimmerle, father of Fred and Henry Zimmerle, famed San Antonio conjunto musicians, were setting the foundations for what would later become a very distinctive sound recognized as "*el sonido de San Antonio*" (the San Antonio sound). This variety is distinct from Valley conjunto in its faster beat, different accordion technique and style, and the inclusion

of many other musical genres, such as Cajun, jazz, and rock and roll. It has yielded a highly stylized, urban sound. Today there are three recognized regional conjunto sounds: the San Antonio sound, "*el sonido de Corpus*" or the Coastal Bend sound, and the Valley sound.

The modern conjunto builds on the foundation laid by Narciso Martínez and Santiago Almeida. Martínez departed from convention by emphasizing the treble side of the accordion and leaving the bass line to Almeida's expert *bajo* playing. The two forever forged the relationship of the accordion and *bajo sexto* in conjunto. Other musicians subsequently added conjunto's defining characteristics. Valerio Longoria introduced lyrics through *boleros* and *rancheras*. Tony de la Rosa cemented the use of drums and amplification. Conjunto Bernal is seen as the most consummate stylized conjunto with its three-part harmonies and dual accordions. Regardless of the influence of outside events, conjunto remains grounded in accordion, *bajo sexto*, and dance.

Conjunto as Dance Music

First and foremost, conjunto is dance music. One musician described the distinction between conjunto and Tejano music as music you dance to as opposed to music you applaud for. Its mainstay are polkas and *rancheras* (generally Mexican-originated songs with a polka beat) but also includes *cumbias*, *huapangos*, *redovas*, *chotis*, *danzones*, and *boleros*, as can be heard on this recording.

As social institutions, dances change to mirror the changes in communication technology and social

mores. In the late 1920s, when conjunto was beginning to define itself with the likes of Bruno Villareal, Lolo Cavazos, and Narciso Martínez, the South Texas region was isolated from the rest of American society. Dances were an important part of a community's social life. Baldo Ramírez, a South Texas musician, remembers that weekend dances were spontaneously organized at a ranch or farm or through a loosely organized system as described by Enrique Vela in an interview. A pattern of gatherings emerged at predetermined ranches and times so that communities had some sense of the pending events. In the South Texas Las Yescas area, local entrepreneur Don¹ Indalecio Gonzales regularly scheduled dances called *funciones* (functions), at which there were a variety of activities. The dance area was the central focus, with small vending booths located around it for the sale of food or curios. Families attended with their daughters, and young men bought small bags of fruits, candies, or decorative dishes at the vending booths, which they then offered to their dance partner's mother. These *funciones* would last all day and could include horse racing and small-scale gambling. Don Indalecio at times had small hot-air balloons at his *funciones*. At the end of the evening the balloons were set on fire and released to signal the end of the dance. As these events were for the whole family, a certain "proper" demeanor was expected of the attendees.

Since their beating could be heard for many miles, the *tambora de rancho* served to announce the

funciones. With the coming of automobiles, another advertising approach dominated. The *convite*, a truck loaded with musicians, drove around the countryside to "invite" people to dances.

Only instrumental music was played at these family *funciones*. The addition of vocals into family-oriented dances did not occur on a regular basis until the 1950s, because of the perception that singing was associated with "taxi" dances, where women were paid to dance, and with prostitution.

By the 1940s families also attended the pay dances that were becoming more commonplace. Men paid a small admission fee for the privilege of dancing. Since some of these events were still held outdoors, men were given a *distintivo*, a badge or ribbon, that was worn on the collar identifying them as having paid. It was not until later that women were asked to pay to attend dances. By the 1960s it became more acceptable for single women to attend dances in small groups, but never alone, as their intentions would have been in question.

Once, dancers had to know a great variety of dance steps to demonstrate their prowess. Dance styles have undergone changes, as intricate tunes such as mazurkas, *danzones*, and tangos have been replaced by the simpler, more dancer-friendly *rancheras*. By the 1940s a slower, smooth dance style known as *el tacuachito* (baby opossum) had evolved. Imagine dancers, with little or no space between them, rhythmically plod-

ding to the music, looking much like a baby opossum on its mother's back. This style originated in the *pachuco* era as a youthful revolution against the established mores of the times. Independent of its counter-culture origins, some musicians argue that the style has persisted as a response to the region's environment. This subtle dance style does not require great amounts of energy—an asset when you're trying to dance in hot, humid weather on a crowded dance floor.

For the musicians, people not dancing is an indication that they are not enjoying the music. Conjuntos will experiment with different tunes to get a sense of what the audience wants to hear. Younger listeners prefer *cumbias* and polkas, while older folks enjoy dancing to more complicated rhythms. Although waltzes are part of the conjunto repertoire, they are generally reserved for the ceremonial portions of wedding and *quinceañera* dances. Recently incorporated influences include Cajun, zydeco, country and western, rock and roll, salsa, and Latin jazz. As long as it's danceable, it's allowable.

Conjunto bands also use other devices to keep people dancing. As they introduce a song, the musicians animate the audience with the Spanish equivalent of "shake your booty," for example, "*mover la cadera*" (move the hips), "*mover el bote*" (move the can), or "*mover la canasta*" (move the basket). Exceptional dancers are recognized by the musicians. Medleys are often played to keep the dance floor full, the idea being that a medley will have something for everybody to enjoy.

The Future of Conjunto

Today conjunto is heard in countries around the world. Given its relatively local origins, it would have been hard to imagine the impact it has made on the United States' musical mosaic. As conjunto musician Amadeo Flores has stated,

If anybody would have told me: "You know what? Thirty years from now, 40 years from now, it's going to be a big thing." I would have said: "Man, you're lying! There's no way this music is going to go this big." And I would have made a mistake....

Still, there are concerns for its continued survival. As pioneering conjunto musicians get older, so do the fans who have supported the music throughout its evolution and history. (The same trend is seen with European classical music audiences in the U.S.) Young people are the key to conjunto's continued survival. A number of activities are underway to facilitate a connection with young people. Musician and schoolteacher Benny Layton is a member of the family conjunto band, Los Hermanos Layton. His teaching efforts at Edcouch-Elsa High School in Elsa, Texas, are a prime example of how the traditional conjunto format and repertoire can be integrated into classroom settings and curricula. Layton teaches music theory and instruction using the button accordion and *bajo sexto* alongside conventional school band instruments. Several budding musicians have emerged from his conjunto program.

1 In Spanish the honorific "Don" is used with a man's first name as a sign of respect rather than the more formal "Mr."

Accordion classes have become extremely popular at the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center, Juan Seguin Cultural Arts Center, and the Narciso Martínez Cultural Arts Center, where they are offered on a regular basis. Master musicians, such as Valero Longoria, Eva Ybarra, Santiago Jiménez, Jr., José Moreno, Rigo Garza, Rudy López, and Oscar Hernández, serve as teachers and mentors through these courses. To some degree this process helps preserve some of the older music, at least for as long as we have the instructors.

Conjunto music is reaching wider audiences and reconnecting with local communities through festivals. The most important of these is the Tejano Conjunto Festival that takes place every May in San Antonio, Texas. For the past 18 years this event has been sponsored by the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center. Festival founder and organizer Juan Tejeda is credited with bringing this music out of relative obscurity even in its own regional setting. The festival now attracts an international audience and has included conjuntos from Japan and Europe.

Other venues provide opportunities for a larger audience to experience this music that they otherwise would not hear easily. Conjunto has been heard in the Washington, D.C., area at The Barns at Wolf Trap and several Smithsonian Folklife Festivals. Cultural exchange programs have taken conjunto artists to various places throughout the world including Russia, Europe, Japan, and the Middle East.

Other preservation efforts are rescuing some older music from complete oblivion. Chris Strachwitz, founder and owner of Arhoolie Records, is a leader in these efforts. He acquired original master recordings of some conjunto's pioneers, and, since the late 1980s and early 1990s, Strachwitz has been reissuing "this material," mostly through mail order. Music from conjunto's early and formative years is available again for the younger generation to listen to and learn from.

With today's technological advancements a great deal of this music has now been recorded onto compact disc, making it available to consumers. And, of course, conjuntos continue to record new music.

Recognition of this musical form has extended beyond the local level. The South Texas Conjunto Association was recently created for the recognition and promotion of conjunto music. Fourteen awards were given at its first awards ceremony in 1999. The Conjunto Hall of Fame recognizes pioneers in all facets of the genre. Acknowledgment of conjunto as part of the American musical tapestry has come through the National Endowment for the Arts. Narciso Martínez (1983), Valerio Longoria (1986), Pedro Ayala (1988), Santiago Almeida (1993), and Tony de la Rosa (1998) have received the N.E.A.'s National Heritage Fellowship award.

Since the music's inception, dances have been the one constant dissemination device. Record companies come and go, radio stations change format, but the public pay dance and celebratory

dances remain. Conjunto has endured many obstacles and attempts to change it. It continues to be a living music for people in the community. Traditional conjunto music must remain for the most part relatively untouched by mainstream American popular culture for it to retain its sincere beauty, charm, and, above all, its true meaning, music for the people—music for dancing: *música para la gente—música para bailar*.



1 EL BURRO PARDO (canción ranchera)

Gilberto Pérez y sus Compadres

Gilberto Pérez, Sr.: accordion, vocals; Gilberto Pérez, Jr.: bajo sexto, vocals; José "Pepe" Maldonado: bass guitar, vocals; Javier Pérez: drums; Cande Aguilar, Sr.: vocals; Fred Saenz: M.C.

"Burro Pardo" is a play on words comparing a long-time lover to a tired old donkey. The greyish-red donkey, the *burro pardo*, is likened to the greyish man in this relationship. The easy-flowing style makes this an excellent dance tune and allows dancers to exert a minimum amount of energy. The *bajo sexto* is very tight and steady throughout, and the voices and lyrics are sublimated and almost inconsequential to the dance music.

Roan Donkey

[Here it goes, Imelda]

With the clothes you put on
And you see that you are much younger
I become jealous and I begin to think.
"Perhaps now I am too old
And you are going to replace me for another,
Another dummy to take my place."

For some while I've wanted to tell you something
Even though it is certain that because
of grey hair I am dull.

This old donkey never brayed
(2nd never gives up)
You just load this dull donkey.

[Let's give it gas on the way down.]

I do not know where you got the idea
That I look like a roan donkey.
In the end you'll see.
I just want you to know
That age does not matter.
I can pull your cart and many more.



2 LA SIGODELICA (polka)

Ernesto Guerra y su Conjunto

Ernesto Guerra: accordion, vocals; Tony "El Hormigón" Torres: bajo sexto, vocals; Mel "El Unico" Villarreal: bass guitar, vocals; Gilberto Smith, Jr.: drums

This original Ernesto Guerra polka contains a prime example of an accordion riff modified for the three-row button accordion by Guerra known as "El Jorgoneo" (gurgle). The riff consists of rapid in-and-out movement of the bellows to create a gurgling sound. The riff has become popular with accordianists who can master it. Guerra uses a lot of full chords in his music, a deviation from the conjunto tradition.



3 EL SINALOENSE (cumbia)

Mingo Saldívar y sus Tremendos Cuatro Espadas

Domingo "Mingo" Saldívar: accordion, vocals; Alex Delgado: bajo sexto; Frank Salazar: bass guitar, vocals; Jesse "El Chivo" Garza: vocalist; Rubén Mendoza: drums

This *cumbia* demonstrates how much conjunto has changed from its early days. Besides being an atypical tune for the traditionalist, it allows the *bajo sexto* great liberties in taking the lead. This uniquely urban, San Antonio, "Mingo" style also includes some lyrics in English, which fits his urban and bilingual personality perfectly. Mingo's performance is the incarnation of "feeling the music." Mingo gets into his music so much that he plays notes that "just feel right" but can never be duplicated for recordings.

The Sinaloan

Ay Ay Ay, Oh my God (4 times)

*From Navolato I come
They say I was born in El Roble.
They say I am a teamster
Because I whistled and they stop.
Their hats are loosened
Now see how they stop.*

Ay, Ay, Ay, Oh my God

*Oh my goodness how drunk I come
Let the drum follow me.
Let them play "El Quelite"
And then "El Niño Perdido"
And finally "El Torito"
See how I show off.*

Ay, Ay, Ay, Oh my God (2 times)

*[That bass, let it be heard, Alejandra]
[Enjoy it, my dark one]*

*From the county of Novolato
Mexico, down in Sinaloa
I'm a cowboy, a cattle driver
Made from good stock and real strong fiber
And in good times, also bad times
Always been a strong survivor.*

**4 EL PORRON (redova)****Ricardo Guzmán y Los Tres Aces**

Ricardo Guzmán Sr.: accordion, vocals; Juan Ricardo Guzmán Jr.: bajo sexto, vocals; Carlos Gonzales: bass guitar, vocals; Higinio Guzmán: vocals; Juan Ricardo Guzmán III: drums

This redova, by Premont, Texas, native Juan López, is representative of the music that dominated the era prior to the 1950s. After World War II conjunto music began a transition that included many more vocals in the form of *rancheras* set to a conjunto polka rhythm for easier dancing. It is ironic that as conjunto music became more urban, it became increasingly referred to as "*ranchera*," a word alluding to ranches and rural life. López is known as "*El Rey de la Redova*" (the King of Redova).

**5 BAJO SEXTO Y ACCORDION (canción ranchera)****Freddy González y Los Super Unidos**

Hipólito "Polo" Contreras, Sr.: accordion, vocals; Freddy González: bajo sexto, vocals; Antonio González, Jr.: bass guitar, vocals; Marcelino González: drums

This *ranchera* pays homage to conjunto's signature instruments and the talented individuals who play the music. Without a *bajo sexto* and an accordion it's simply not conjunto. The composer speaks of *menudo*, a regional food that is believed to be good for curing hangovers. Some South Texas bars serve *menudo* at closing time, hoping to save their customers from the consequences of the evening. The composer reminds musicians that it is their obligation to the community to continue playing this music.

Bajo Sexto and Accordion

*So much local talent
Also international
We bring you the message
In a very special form.*

*We sing our songs
With a lot of heart
It is Tejano music
Bajo sexto and accordion.*

*The colleagues from that time
Left us a goal
To bring happiness with our music
For our Mixteca race.*

*From the Pacific to the Gulf
An old accordion is heard
That touches your emotions
And makes your heart beat.*

*How beautiful are our people
Because they are hard workers
Our music is more beautiful
When it's heard with a drum.*

*What a great combination
Let's lower the high-pitch sounds
Together with my compadre's bass
Like menudo for someone with a hangover.*

*That is the way to combine a group
Also with inspiration
The scourge of my Texas—
Bajo sexto and accordion.*

(Verse 4 repeats)



6 JUAREZ (danzón)

Los Brillantes de Martín Zapata

Martín "El Ace" Zapata: accordion, vocals; Héctor Xavier Guajardo: bajo sexto; José Olalde: bass guitar; Pedro Saldaña: drums, vocals

"Juárez" is one of the most popular of the Mexican *danzones*. This piece refers to the famed Benito Juárez (president of Mexico on and off from 1855 to 1872. Originally of Cuban origin, the *danzón* became quite popular in Veracruz and Mexico City during the "*danzón* fever" of the 1920s–1940s. *Danzones* did not become popular with conjuntos until the 1950s, when conjunto moved from the fields into pay dance halls. *Danzones* are requested by more experienced dancers.

Juárez

*Juárez should not have died,
Oh should not have died!*

*Juárez should not have died,
Oh should not have died!*

Because if Juárez, had not died...



7 EL CHUECO (polka)

Los Fantasma del Valle

Mike González: accordion; Julián Figueroa: bajo sexto, vocals; Héctor Barrón: bass guitar, vocals; Cruz González: drums

At age 17 months, composer Ben Valdéz was struck with polio. As a young child he sat at the window watching his friends play. Unable to participate in these childhood activities he channeled his energies into music. Valdéz is known to his friends as "*El Chueco*," a name that originated with his mother's term of endearment, "*Mi Chueco*" (My Crooked One).



8 NOCHE DE AMORES (canción ranchera)

Valerio Longoria y su Conjunto

Valerio Longoria, Sr.: accordion, vocals; Valerio Longoria, Jr.: bajo sexto, vocals; Flavio Longoria: bass guitar, vocals; Pedro López: drums

"*Noche de Amores*" contains a "Valerioism"—accordion riffs recognized as Valerio Longoria Sr.'s signature. They consist of runs on the scales with portions repeated in what sounds like they are sustained too long but then fall into the next verse. Longoria is a stylistically unique and innovative conjunto performer. He began breaking with tradition by standing during performances, singing *boleros* as a conjunto standard, singing and accompanying himself simultaneously, and using conga drums. He is known as the granddaddy of modern conjunto, a title that seems odd for someone who is constantly freshening up his music. After 60 years of playing, Valerio continues to find new ways to approach conjunto, including listening to short-wave radio from

Columbia and other Latin American countries for new material.

Night of Lovers

*My life's illusion has ended
My reason to live has died
Sadness dominates my life
To my life, my love I hindered.*

*I pass the nights mourning
And crying, crying for you
Waiting for you to return to me
Perhaps you do not even remember me.*

*Don't leave me, my love, I beg you
Don't leave, don't make me suffer
Now remember the nights of love
And the love you gave me and I gave you.*



9 EL SENDERITO (chotis)

Amadeo Flores y su Conjunto

Amadeo Flores: accordion; Juan Antonio "Tony" Tapia: bajo sexto, vocals; José "Pepe" Maldonado: bass guitar, vocals; Jesús Godines, Jr.: drums

Narciso Martínez composed this tune in the 1930s. Schottische was one of the most popular dance styles prior to the introduction of the *cancción ranchera*. Schottische dance steps are intricate and not for the uninitiated. Social dance contestants had to master several varieties of danceable tunes, and schottisches were often used as tie-breakers. Today when these tunes are played, younger audiences watch grey-haired dancers strut their stuff.



10 MALDITO VICIO (canción ranchera)

Joe Ramos y Ellos

Niro Martínez: accordion; Joe Ramos: accordion, vocals; Fito Valle: bajo sexto, vocals; David Hinojosa: bass guitar; Beto Martínez: vocalist; Ray Garcia: drums

This *ranchera* alternates between a *ranchera* tempo and a *valsiada* or waltz tempo. Joe Ramos y Ellos commonly employ two accordions and three singers, reflecting a 1960s conjunto style that flourished due to the influence of Conjunto Hall of Famer Paulino Bernal. The slower tempo specifically emphasizes the vocals. This group is popular partially because they emphasize romantic tunes that captivate audiences.

Damned Vice

*Drink and more drink, that is my life
Damned vice I cannot leave you.
Between drinks, I want more served to me
Because drunk I want to ramble.*

*I'm a drunk and I want more served to me.
Now more than ever I want to drown myself in liquor.
This vice has dragged down my life
And all for this vain women
That I have loved so much.*

*Damned vice! You are killing me!
You are taking me away! Just like her!
Just like her! You are taking me to my destruction.*



11 ATOTONILCO (polka)

Tony de la Rosa y su Conjunto

Tony de la Rosa: accordion, vocals; José "Trino" Sánchez: bajo sexto; Edgar Vásquez: bass guitar; Tony Osornio: vocalist; Adán de la Rosa: vocalist; Jorge Vásquez: drums

This conjunto standard is one of the first learned by any aspiring accordionist. This arrangement is by Tony de la Rosa, who learned it from his mother playing it on a *música de boca* (harmonica). De la Rosa, a National Heritage Fellowship award winner, has played for over 50 years. His first professional jobs were as a fiddle player for country bands, playing at honky tonks in and around Kingsville, Texas. He later incorporated the accordion in his country tunes and eventually formed

the Conjunto de la Rosa in 1949. "*Atotonilco*" has a mystical effect on dancers. Any dancer worth his or her salt won't remain seated with this polka. This tune is known as the national anthem of conjunto—perhaps in part because de la Rosa is known as the "King of Polkas."

12 CREI (bolero)

Freddy González y Los Super Unidos

(see track 5 for instrumentation)

"Creí" is a Mexican trio standard that has been "*conjuntoized*." Boleros were one of several innovations of the 1950s and early 1960s, introduced by Valerio Longoria the conjunto repertoire. Dance steps consist of very slow, sensual movements—behavior not permissible in *familias buenas* (proper families) prior to the 1950s, when dances were very proper events with unwritten rules of behavior. This style became popular, as there was greater exposure to Anglo-American culture that allowed, by Mexican-American standards, more public displays of affection.

I Believed

*I believed your life was mine
And that you loved me, the way I loved you.
I sang the song of my dreams
There was light in my sky, happiness in my heart.
After, my song became sad
I cried because I lost you.*

[Man, sic the dogs on her!]

13 CALLE DIEZ Y SIETE (huapango)

Ernesto Guerra y su Conjunto

(see track 2 for instrumentation)

Huapangos originate in the Huasteca region, in the northeast of Mexico. During the 1930s–1950s they moved from being a folk genre to become part of the urban, commercial regional music that was being played by other ensembles like mariachis and conjuntos. Each of these types of musical ensembles stamped its distinctive rhythm on their variety of *huapango*. Of all the older genres overshadowed by the polka rhythm, *huapango* maintains a significant degree of popularity. Perhaps this is because there is great leeway in how they are danced. Teenagers dance them like a country-western line dance, and more sophisticated dancers execute complicated dance steps.

14 BELLOS RECUERDOS (canción ranchera)

Los Fantasmas del Valle

(see track 7 for instrumentation)

This Mercedes, Texas, band plays a great *ranchera* with a tempo that typifies the *tacuahito* dance style. The lyrics detail the experiences of most Valley residents over the age of 50. This prolific composer commonly draws from his experiences in and observations of the Valley. In "*Bellos Recuerdos*," Los Fantasmas sing about nostalgic recollections of a childhood in the cotton fields. Even though these were very trying times, what remains are fond memories.

Beautiful Memories

*I still remember the 40s
When I picked cotton with my parents.
I woke up very early in the morning
To go early to the fields.*

*With the morning dew
The first weigh-in was the best.
And together we picked three bales
By the time the sun got hot.*

*I was only six years old
And I could not drag the sack.
But I wanted to help my parents
With a little sack I would pick.*

*At exactly twelve, my mother would say
Come, my children, let's eat.
Under the truck we'd all eat
Refried beans, potatoes, and coffee.*

*There in Chapeño we picked
Then we went to Robstown.
There in Corpus Christi we tried
Our first hamburger with 7-Up.*

*From those barracks after dinner
We'd all come out to rest.
Some talked and others sang
With an old bajo just to have some fun.*

(Verses 4,5,6 repeated)

*One day my father and I went to town
We were happy, me and my dad.
With a quarter we went to the movies
And we even brought back some popcorn for mom.*

Now I am alone, my parents have gone,
But I have them in my heart.
The sun and the moon have been witness
To when we worked picking cotton.

The years of the '40s were the golden age.
How I miss them, I want to cry.
I am left only with beautiful memories
Of those moments that will not return.

15 SKOKIE (polka)

Amadeo Flores y su Conjunto

(see track 9 for instrumentation)

This conjunto “dream team” was brought together especially for the 1998 Smithsonian Folklife Festival. Amadeo Flores has played *bajo sexto* and accordion for 50 years with some of the top conjuntos and been a leader of his own band. He is credited with creating *bajo sexto* riffs that are still used by musicians today. Tony Tapia comes from the musical family of Feliciano Tapia and began his professional career at age five. He is also the leader and accordionist of his own group. Pepe Maldonado has been playing for 40 years as an *acordionista* and band leader. Jesús Godines is the baby of the group with only 25 years experience. Though not apparent in this tune, each musician defers to the others and often changes instruments in order to get the best possible performance. Composed by Amadeo Flores, this polka is in honor of Skokie, a Chicago suburb, where he found himself on an extended three-year musical tour during the early 1960s. Flores uses

chord progressions that offer a fuller style—distinct from the staccato sound of “*El Checo*,” which demonstrates an individual button technique. This is representative of the 1960s conjunto style typified by Conjunto Bernal.

16 TRES FLORES (canción ranchera)

Ricardo Guzmán y Los Tres Aces

(see track 4 for instrumentation)

Tres Flores is an excellent example of the *bajo sexto* setting the beat for easy dancing. The rhythm lends itself to a *tacuachito* style, and with a slight variation it can be danced with partners standing side by side, as they move forward in large circular motions. The woman is twirled around embellishing the dance as the man keeps a steady tempo in his forward motion. A similar analogy can be made between this dance partner relationship and that of the accordion to the *bajo sexto*. As the *bajo sexto* keeps the steady tempo, the accordion embellishes the tune with riff flourishes.

Three Flowers

*Of three flowers that I cut in the morning
One of them had a bud.
I adored you like the most beautiful angel
Today, I live sadly impassioned for your love.
I've told you, I don't want, I can't
Live without your gaze.
What I want is to see you stabbed to death
Before seeing you in the arms of another traitor.*



17 ARRANCATE (redova)

Conjunto Aztlan

Juan Tejeda: accordion; José Flores Peregrino: bajo sexto, vocals; Armando Tejeda: bass guitar, vocals; Daniel Mendoza: percussion; Clemencia Zapata: drums

Redovas such as “*Arráncate*” are associated with a very stylish dance. In a recent renewal of dance contests held at Narciso Martínez Cultural Arts Center, the elegant *redova* was the highlight of the evening. All the members of this San Antonio- and Austin-based conjunto are college-educated, and José Flores Peregrino is an English literature professor. This group is known for their excellent renditions of traditional tunes and their progressive original compositions. Here they perform a conjunto standard by Valerio Longoria.



18 LOS LAURELES (canción ranchera)

Los Rieles Express de San Benito

Adrián Jackson Becerra: accordion; Rolando Becerra, Sr.: bajo sexto, vocals; Rodolfo Becerra: bass guitar; Rolando Becerra, Jr.: drums; Martín Sánchez: vocalist

Adapted to a *ranchera* beat, this traditional mariachi tune is now a conjunto standard. Like many other conjuntos, Los Rieles are a family-based group. Family conjuntos facilitate the transmission of this musical tradition from generation to generation. The accordionist, 16-year-old Adrián Jackson, recently replaced his uncle. He became interested in conjunto after he dreamt that Narciso Martínez spoke to him of the music. Jackson states, “We got the feeling of the music. The more we play it, the more we like it. You feel it in your heart—you can't just sit there and listen to this music.”

The Laurels

Oh how green the laurels are!
What blazing flowers!
If you're thinking of leaving me
Better to take away my life.
Lift up your eyes to see me
If you are not betrothed.

You are a Castilian rose
Seen only in May.
I'd like to invite you
But in truth I do not know.
If there is one to prevent it
Better that I should leave.

[Up with San Benito!]
[And throw on firewood!]

You are a cotton plant
That resides in the bud.
How it grieves me so
To see you filled with pride
Upon seeing my heart
Entangled with yours.
So goes the farewell
Little one, for your affections.
The ruin of men
Are the blessed women;
And here we stop singing
The verses of the laurels.



19 EL COCO RAYADO (cumbia)

Rubén Vela y su Conjunto

Rubén Vela Sr.: accordion, vocals; Frank Hernández: bajo sexto; Jaime Solis: bass guitar; Enrique Naranjo: vocals; Jesse Turner: percussion, keyboards; Rubén Vela, Jr.: drums

"Valle—let's rock this joint." Youth definitely takes over in this *cumbia* interpretation. Accordionist Rubén Vela, Sr., who has played for over 40 years, is surrounded by musicians at least 20 to 30 years his junior. This *cumbia* is spiced up to appeal to a younger audience. But

even this youthful interpretation is focused around the accordion. This track is a good example of how musicians engage an audience by talking to them between verses.

The Stripped Coconut

[Wait a minute, wait a minute. Just listen.]

[Yeah! Four, three, two, one.]

[Valley...Let's rock this joint! Hit it!]

That coconut that Lupe wants
From the palm tree, I rip it off. (2 times)

Oh yes, oh yes. Oh no, oh no.
I want that stripped coconut. (2 times)

"The Rabbit" is a good drummer
Best friend of hearts. (2 times)

[Greetings to....]

[Let's go!]

Yesterday afternoon I passed by your house
They told me that you were ill. (2 times)

[Hit that accordion boss!]

[Let's go! We're gone! A shout!]

[For all the stripped coconuts]

[You've just heard "The Coco Rayado."]

For lyrics in Spanish to these songs go to:

www.si.edu/folkways/40477/lyrics.htm

or send \$2 to:

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings

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RELATED MATERIALS

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1997 *South Texas Polka Party*. Arhoolie Records 9005.

1994 *Tejano Roots: San Antonio's Conjuntos in the 1950's*. Arhoolie Records 376.

ABOUT THIS COLLABORATIVE PROJECT

This project grew out of a partnership developed for a Smithsonian Folklife Festival program on culture and environment in the Río Grande/Río Bravo Basin. The Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage initially approached the Narciso Martínez Cultural Arts Center in San Benito, Texas, to conduct field research on regional music for the Festival program. During the past year and a half, the two centers shared resources, ideas, and information that allowed us to present conjunto music at the 1998 Smithsonian Folklife Festival, record the Narciso Martínez Cultural Arts Center's Conjunto Festival, interview musicians, and produce this recording. This collaborative relationship is based on mutual objectives, respect for the tradition bearers, and a sense of responsibility to preserve and present this music.

This recording captures a unique moment in conjunto musical history. We were fortunate to have all of these artists together at one place and time, and even more fortunate to have them share their music with us. They represent a broad overview of regional conjunto music and hundreds of years of combined musical experience. In this recording you will hear music as it is played before a local audience in a local setting.

TECHNICAL PRODUCTION

After it was decided that Smithsonian Folkways Recordings would record the 7th Annual 16 de Septiembre Conjunto Festival in San Benito, Texas, arrangements were made for shipping equipment. I spoke with David Champion, Director of the Narciso Martínez Cultural Arts Center, and with Robert Richie of the Sound Advice Sound Company to learn what the stage and sound system set-up would be. The recording system consisted of a microphone splitter, a Mackie 8 bus 24-channel mixing console, 16 channels of Tascam DA 38 digital multitrack, a DAT recorder for a reference mix, and near field monitor speakers.

The morning I was scheduled to fly to Harlingen (by way of Houston) was the day after tropical storm Francis let go of its tenacious grip on the Gulf of Mexico and decided to move across Texas. I called the airline to find, surprisingly, that the Houston International Airport was open for business as usual. As we landed in Houston, I could see highways submerged in water nearby. However, I walked off the plane and within an hour was airborne bound for Harlingen. Olivia Cadaval and Cynthia Vidaurri, "*las señoras del huracan*," picked me up at the airport and off we went.

The next morning we went to prepare for the two-day event. The stage consisted of a covered flatbed semi-trailer with a 4'-deep extension in front of it set up at Veteran's Park at the end of Rowson Street in San Benito. Mr. Paul Gonzalez was most generous in allowing me to set up a control room in one of the offices of his insurance company. Cynthia and Olivia set up an interview room in the reception area of Paul's office, where they recorded oral histories of

the performers. Microphones were split at the stage separating the recording "studio" from the public address system, but giving each the exact same inputs to work with. No additional microphones were used on the bands. I did bring a "Terminator," which is an instrument cord with built-in electronics, and a power supply which matches the impedance of single-coil instrument pickups to the impedance of instrument amplifiers. This device, developed by Tom Wright of Atlanta, does a great job of helping to eliminate hums and buzzes among other things. All but a couple of the *bajo sexto* players were willing to use this cord. A couple of microphones were set up to record audience response. This was done with limited success; since I did not use shotgun-type mics, there was considerable "wash" from the sound system into these mics, and the audience stuck to the shady side of the street during the hot daylight hours.

For the next two days the tapes rolled. Everything you hear on this CD is live. There were no second takes and certainly no overdubs. This festival is produced by people in San Benito for the people of San Benito and its surroundings. I hope that local feeling is preserved in these recordings.

We were very fortunate indeed to have had such a wonderful experience, as the weather decided to cooperate for two days. I also feel personally fortunate to have been introduced to the Frito pie, a culinary delight to which I had never before been exposed.

After a preliminary list of selections was made from approximately 17 hours of performances, I mixed the tracks to a 24-bit format using a Ramsa DA 7 digital mixer. The only outboard gear I used here was my Sony R 7 digital reverb unit to add some depth to

vocals and accordions. The format I mixed to was an additional Tascam DA 38 connected to a Rane PaqRat. The PaqRat is a bit splitter which allows four tracks on the DA 38 to be used for two stereo tracks but at 24 bit. The 24 bit quantization rate gives better resolution to the sound than 16 bit mixes to DAT. Editing and mastering were done on a Sonic Solutions workstation with outboard Weiss Equalizer and Limiter/Compressor. The sound was then dithered to 16 bit CD standard.

The selections on this CD were made not only on the basis of quality of sound and performance, but also on the basis of the significance of the music to the people of the Rio Grande Valley as well as how infrequently these songs have been recorded.

We hope you will enjoy!

Cynthia Vidaurri

Pete Reiniger

Co-producers

Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage,
Smithsonian Institution

ABOUT THE NOTE WRITERS

David Champion Jr. lives in Mercedes, Texas, and is the Director of the Narciso Martínez Cultural Arts Center. He is an avid aficionado and plays the accordion and *bajo sexto* guitar. He is an organizer of community cultural events that showcase this particular music. Champion has conducted field research for the Smithsonian Institution and has presented this art form in Washington, D.C., during the Smithsonian Folklife Festival.

Ramon de Leon lives in Harlingen, Texas, where he operates a private dental practice. He is Chair of the Board of Directors of the Narciso Martínez Cultural Arts Center. He has been involved in the music almost all of his life—either by teaching button accordion or the dances that are associated with this music. He is also an amateur historian and ethnomusicologist and has conducted field research for the Smithsonian Institution. He has produced several video works showcasing conjunto legend pioneers.

Cynthia Vidaurri is a South Texas folklorist and coordinator of the Latino Cultural Resource Network of the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. She is co-producer of this recording and co-curator of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival program, "Culture and Environment in the Rio Grande/Rio Bravo Basin."

ABOUT THE NARCISO MARTÍNEZ CULTURAL ARTS CENTER

The Narciso Martínez Cultural Arts Center was established in October 1991 as a community-based center dedicated to preservation, promotion, and development of the rich cultural heritage of the Texas Mexicano community. Since 1992, the Center has produced an annual *Diez y seis de Septiembre* Conjunto Festival that features live performances by Texas Mexican conjuntos. The groups performing at the 1998 Festival include musical luminaries who have been instrumental in defining this musical genre and continue to perform the music in its most traditional form.

The Center is named after Narciso Martínez, "*El Huracan del Valle*," who lived most of his life in La Paloma (near San Benito), Texas. For 64 years he played the accordion up until his death on June 5, 1992. As "the father of modern conjunto music" he played a major role in the region's cultural landscape. He was inducted into the Conjunto Hall of Fame in San Antonio, Texas, and received the National Heritage Award from the National Endowment of the Arts in Washington, D.C. We are honored to name the Center for a man who generously shared his musical talents and Texas-Mexico border experiences.

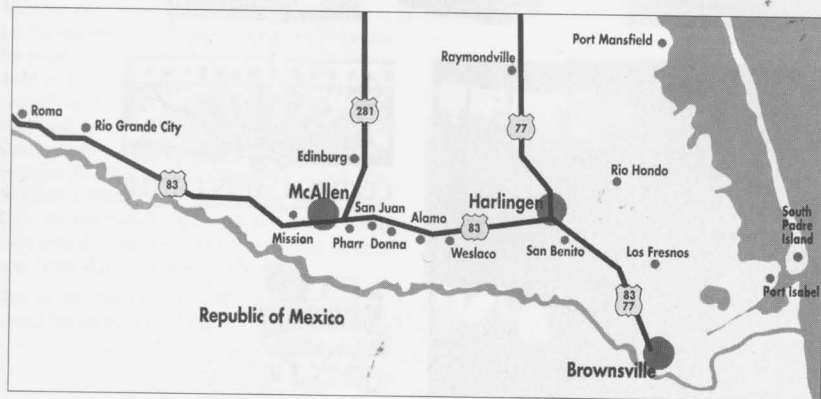
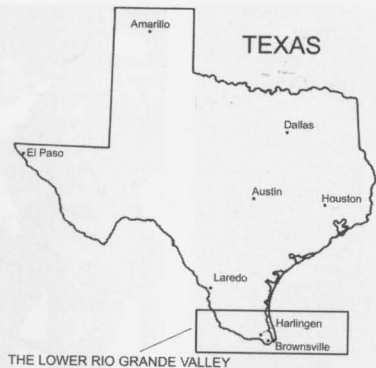
Call us at 956/361-0110 for more information about the Center or visit us in San Benito.



ENJOY IT LIVE

To enjoy this music in its natural setting, visit the Lower Rio Grande Valley. There you can experience the region's rich history, diverse cultures, and tropical beauty first-hand and savor mouth-watering regional specialties such as *pan dulce*, *menudo*, *barbacoa*, and *fajitas*. Take your appetite and your dancing shoes and enjoy the sights, sounds, scents, and scenes of deep South Texas. For information on how to get there, what to see and do, where to stay, and other information contact: The Harlingen Area Chamber of Commerce.

Visit their Web site at <http://www.harlingen.com/>, or call toll-free (from U.S.A. and Canada), 1-800-531-7346.



CREDITS

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ABOUT SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS

Folkways Records was founded by Moses Asch in 1948 to document music, spoken word, instruction, and sounds from around the world. In the ensuing decades, New York City-based Folkways became one of the largest independent record labels in the world, reaching a total of nearly 2,200 albums that were always kept in print.

The Smithsonian Institution acquired Folkways from the Moses Asch estate in 1987 to ensure that the sounds and genius of the artists would be preserved for future generations. All Folkways recordings are available on high-quality audio cassettes or by special order on CD. Each recording is packed in a special box along with the original LP liner notes.

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings was formed to continue the Folkways tradition of releasing significant recordings with high-quality documentation. It produces new titles, reissues of historic recordings from Folkways and other record labels, and in collaboration with other companies also produces instructional videotapes and recordings to accompany published books, and other educational projects.

The Smithsonian Folkways, Folkways, Cook, Paredon, Dyer-Bennet, Fast Folk, and Monitor record labels are administered by the Smithsonian Institution's Center for Folklife and Cultural Her-

itage. They are one of the means through which the Center supports the work of traditional artists and expresses its commitment to cultural diversity, education, and increased understanding.

You can find Smithsonian Folkways Recordings at your local record store. Smithsonian Folkways, Folkways, Cook, Paredon, and Dyer-Bennet recordings are all available through:

Smithsonian Folkways Mail Order
955 L'Enfant Plaza, Suite 7300,
Washington, DC 20560-0953
phone (202) 287-7298
fax (202) 287-7299
orders only 1 (800) 410-9815
(Discover, MasterCard, Visa, and
American Express accepted)

For further information about all the labels distributed through the Center, please consult our Internet site (www.si.edu/folkways), which includes information about recent releases, our catalogue, and a database of the approximately 35,000 tracks from the more than 2,300 available recordings (click on *database search*).

Or request a printed catalogue by writing to: Catalogue, Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, 955 L'Enfant Plaza, SW, Suite 7300, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC 20560-0953, USA. Or use our catalogue request phone: (202) 287-3262, or e-mail folkways@aol.com



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