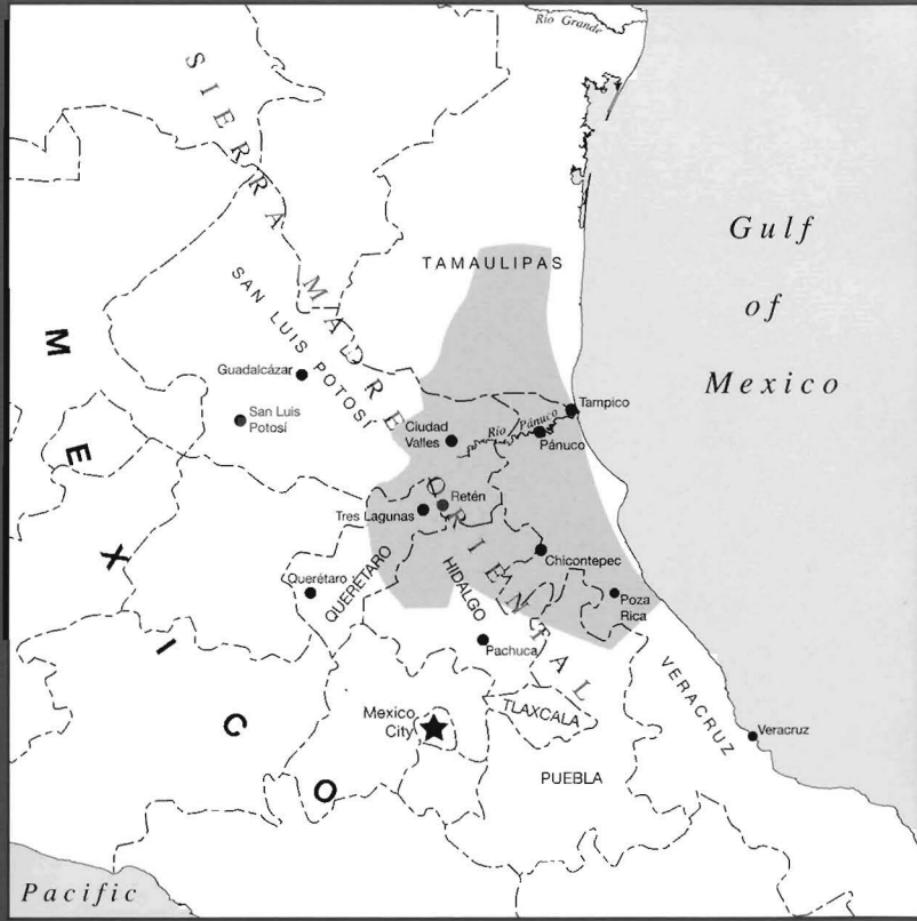




Smithsonian Folkways Recordings

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Los Camperos de Valles

el ave de mi soñar

Mexican Songs Huastecos

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*Words by Artemio Posadas except "El caballito," words traditional.

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SFW CD 40512 SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS RECORDINGS



MEXICAN SONES HUASTECOS

Daniel Sheehy

El ave de mi soñar

*I see endless, immense clouds / Approaching on my horizon.
And the bird of my dreams / Flies lost in the jungle.
Silent in its nest, / The mockingbird is without a song.*

"I don't know why I was drawn to the son huasteco. I believe it was the falsetto that really got to me, along with the profundity of its poetry."

- ARTEMIO POSADAS, HUASTECAN MUSICIAN
AND PRODUCER OF THIS RECORDING.

Soaring, florid poetry memorializing the longing, pleasure, and pain of love, delivered in song with equally soaring high falsetto breaks, marks the classic style of the *son huasteco*, music created by rural people of the northeastern region of Mexico known as La Huasteca. Artemio Posadas, lifelong

musician and advocate for this music, adds that the ornate improvisations of the violin, the melodic interventions of the deep-bodied *huapanguera* guitar, and the unique stringed sound of the Huastecan trio are essential ingredients of the *son huasteco* tradition. This recording represents the best of the tradition while encouraging its ongoing creativity through the lively interpretations of the trio Los Camperos de Valles and the original poetry of Artemio Posadas.

The *Huasteca* [wah-STEH-kah] is one of Mexico's most distinctive and celebrated cultural

regions—overlapping six states in northeastern Mexico: San Luis Potosí, Veracruz, Tamaulipas, Hidalgo, Querétaro, and Puebla [see map]. Most of the region is flatland exploited for cattle herding, sugarcane growing, and petroleum extraction. It is home to several prominent Indian groups, including the Tének (also known as Huastecs), who are related historically to the Mayans of southern Mexico, and the Náhuatl people, linked linguistically to the ancient Aztecs. Most *huastecos*, though, are mestizos, members of Mexico's majority population, which emerged from the intermingling of Indians, Spaniards, and those of African heritage brought as slaves during the period of Spanish colonization (1521–1810). The *son huasteco* is an important expression of this centuries-old mestizo identity.

The music called *son* [SOHN] emerged during this formative period of Mexican culture, drawing many threads from the rich and varied Spanish musical heritage, as the conquerors and colonialists worked to substitute their own values and lifestyles for those of the native peoples. By the 19th century, Mexican writers described many regional traditions of *son*, concentrated in the central east-to-west swath of the country most heavily settled by Europeans. One of these was that of the *huastecos*, who, linked for centuries by transportation routes, economic activities, administrative districts, and other common

pursuits, created a distinctive sense of self and region, including traditions of music and dance.

Today, most *sones* fall into one of three categories: those linked to a region, part of a repertoire known collectively as *música regional*; mestizo *sones*, those associated with more professionalized, institutionalized, panregional musical groups, such as the *mariachi* or the *banda* (brass band) scattered today throughout Mexico; or Indian *sones*. Indian people throughout Mexico perform their own repertoires of *sones*, closely tied to dance and ritual, which are very repetitious, spinning out a short melody to accompany a wedding procession, a ritual dance, a devotional ceremony, or other activity.

Regional styles of *son* share some common ground. Most are vigorous and marked in their rhythmic drive, suitable to accompany social dancing, worldly rather than sacred in their lyrics, and organized around the alternation of short segments of sung poetry and instrumental sections. They may differ greatly, however, in other ways: instrumentation, instrumental techniques, vocal nuances, repertoire, and dances they accompany, for example. The *son huasteco* is distinctive in all these ways, and it places special emphasis on violin improvisation during its instrumental sections. It is also known as the *huapango*, a word thought to derive from the Náhuatl term *cuauh-panco* ('on top of the wood'), perhaps referring to the

wooden platform provided for the dancers in rural celebrations. The meaning of *huapango*, however, is broader than just the *son huasteco*. It refers to the large repertoire of fixed, composed songs set in a *son huasteco* rhythm but sung in an arranged, harmonized style, as well as the more improvised and unpredictable *son huasteco*.

The *son huasteco* is typically performed by the *trío huasteco*, three musicians playing three instruments and singing. The violin leads with the melody, accompanied by two guitars that are unique to the region. The *huapanguera*, also known as *guitarra quinta*, is deep-bodied with five courses of strings. Typically, the three lowest-pitched courses have two strings each, and the remaining two courses have one string only. The tuning differs from that of the common six-stringed guitar. It is G1-D-G-B-E, with the interval of a major fifth between the first two courses and the tuning descending a major fifth from the fourth to fifth course. This tuning creates deep, full sonorities. The *jarana huasteca* is smaller, with five strings, tuned G-B-d-f#-a. Its higher pitch and tighter sound can be clearly heard, particularly when the player executes special effects such as the *redoble* (roll, a short down-and-up stroke of the strings) and the *abanico* ("fan," when the strumming hand opens the fingers in the fashion of an unfolding fan and draws them across the strings, creating a rhythmic flourish). Both guitars are strummed

in characteristic *son huasteco* rhythms and hand patterns called *rasgueos*. The traditional style of playing the *huapanguera* includes occasional breaks of *pespunteo*—plucked, single-string melodies—as well as *redobles* and *abanicos*. *Huapanguera* player Marcos Hernández on this recording is renowned for his *pespunteo* skill.

High-pitched voices marked by occasional falsetto breaks that ornament the melody distinguish Huastecan singing style from that of all other *sones*. The voices of two great masters of this style, Joel Monroy and Marcos Hernández, grace this recording. The singers interpret traditional melodies to deliver short stanzas of poetry called *coplas*. Most *coplas* on this recording are from four to six lines in length, often with the first two lines of each *copla* repeated as the singers alternate. In general, the poetry heard in the performance of the *son huasteco* may be drawn from a repertoire of verses that already exists within the tradition, may be improvised for the occasion at hand, or may be newly composed beforehand.

Los Camperos de Valles

The trio, roughly translated into English as "The Countrymen from Valles," takes its name from the city of Ciudad Valles in the state of San Luis Potosí. The members remember that the group formed about 1974, when Joel Monroy joined Marcos Hernández and Heliodoro Copado.

All three were veteran musicians. Copado was considered one of the greatest exponents of the Huastecan violin tradition. Hernández was an accomplished singer and *huapanguera* player. Monroy had specialized in the violin previously, but took up the *jarana* to complete the trio. When Monroy moved to Tampico, Tamaulipas, to play with Los Caimanes ('The Alligators'), Gregorio Solano took his place on *jarana*. As Copado's health declined, Monroy, who had stayed in contact with the Camperos while in Tampico, rejoined the group around 1995. The group performed throughout Mexico and has toured in England, France, Sweden, and Spain. They frequently visit the United States, especially the Mexican communities in California and Chicago.

The leader of Los Camperos de Valles, Marcos Hernández Rosales, was born on 25 April 1951 in Tres Lagunas, a small town in the municipality of Landa de Matamoros, in the state of Querétaro. At age 15, he moved to Valles, where he took up the *guitarra quinta* and played in the group of his uncle Fortino Hernández Robles. Their group, Los Cantores de la Sierra, was active for several years in Valles until the uncle returned to Querétaro. Hernández remembers being inspired by the *pespunteo* melodies of Zeferino Galindo, a member of Los Cantores de Pánuco, heard on XESW radio out of Tampico. Galindo was his model, and Hernández gained his own reputation as an

interpreter of the technique. He plays *pespunteo* as a form of musical display, "When you are pumped up, when the people are watching you."

Jarana player and singer Gregorio "Goyo" Solano Medrano was born and raised on the farm known as Ejido Zocohuite in the municipality of Valles, about eight kilometers from downtown Ciudad Valles. His father played Huastecan violin for many get-togethers, including dances, birthday parties, and baptisms. He started going with his father to these events around the age of twelve, marking the beginnings of his life as a professional musician. Goyo recalls, "I was getting more involved in the musical scene, listening at first. Little by little, my dad showed me the chord positions, and after learning a bit, I worked my way into the trio." After getting some experience playing *jarana* with his father, at sixteen, he began playing with various trios in Valles. He joined Los Camperos de Valles in about 1979. He likes to add his own rhythmic embellishments to his hand patterns (*rasgueos*), and values the individual mark that he and others put on their playing: "Not all of us have the same hand patterns. Each one puts his own special stamp on it. Even though it might sound a bit similar, it is not the same." He is also known as a *trovador*, a singer who can improvise verses, or, in his words, "tell lies in the fiestas." Being a *trovador* is of great value as a professional musician.

Violinist and singer **Joel Monroy Martínez** hails from the little town of El Retén, San Luis Potosí, on the border with Querétaro, where he was born on 13 July 1949. His grandfather Mateo was a violinist, and an uncle played guitar and *jarana*. He remembers when they played pieces now nearly forgotten called *minuetes* for wakes (*velorios*). By the age of twelve, his interest in Huastecan music took him to wakes, local dances, and other events, following the musicians. He learned violin by imitating others, "just listening. To this day no one has told me it goes like this and it goes like that." He moved to Valles at the age of seventeen and joined local musicians in trios, including Los Cantores de la Sierra, comprised of him, Marcos Hernández, and Marcos' uncle Fortino. Though he started playing music on the violin, he took up the *jarana* to join Los Cantores de la Sierra. When Fortino left Valles, Monroy played with Marcos and violinist Heliodoro Copado in Los Camperos Huastecos, later to be named Los Camperos de Valles. After leaving Valles for several years to work in Tampico, he rejoined Los Camperos in 1995. Joel has a striking falsetto style, strong and clear. He remembers his hesitance when first learning: "When I lived on the ranch, I always wanted to do that, but I was too embarrassed." But listening to the falsetto singing of the group Los Hermanos Calderón gave him confidence: "and from then forward, I

started and kept going up to this day." He speaks strongly about the importance of the falsetto and Huastecan violin stylings to capturing the music's essence: "Falsetto is very important. If there is no falsetto, it's like singing any old song. The *huapango* must have falsetto." And on the special rhythmic and melodic nuances of Huastecan violin style, he says: "If you don't put a little hot chile in the stew, it doesn't taste right."

Artemio Posadas Jiménez produced this recording, selecting the repertoire and musicians, and composed most of the lyrics. He was born on 27 December 1948 on the Ábrego ranch in the municipality of Guadalcázar, in a region of San Luis Potosí state that is home to another style of *son*, the *son arribeño* (highland *son*). His father played *son arribeño*-style (highland *son* style) violin at social occasions. However, when the family moved to the capital city of San Luis Potosí when Artemio was ten years old, he became enamored with the *son huasteco*. "I don't know why I was drawn to the *son huasteco*. I believe it was the falsetto that really got to me, along with the profundity of its poetry," he says. Eventually, he started to play the instruments and spend time with Huastecan musicians, spending long hours at El Comercio bar in the Gulf Coast city of Tampico, where many of them gathered. He traveled throughout the Huasteca, seeking the best performers and teachers, including the trio Los Camperos de Valles. "When I met

them, it was Joel playing *jarana*, Marcos the *quinta*, and Heliodoro Copado the violin," he recalls. In 1979, he resettled to California, where he played and taught the *son huasteco* in Richmond's East Bay Center and privately. He accompanied many dance groups, including Los Lupeños, Xochipilli, Flor de la Esperanza, and Grupo Mestizo. He organized *fandangos* and sponsored musicians from the Huasteca.

On this recording, Posadas composed all the verses except those for "El Caballito," which draws its lyrics from tradition. He emphasizes that in composing verses, one should include at least one verse that relates to the theme of the *son* title,

as may be heard in "La rosa," "Las flores," and "El caimán." He drew inspiration from his own life experiences. "Various things played a role. First came falling in love, then falling out of love. Then came nostalgia." He felt that he could not express himself as fully as he wanted through the Huastecan verses that already existed in tradition. He also felt that the tradition was becoming increasingly petrified, with all the singers singing the same verses. "So there were various elements that came together for me to say, 'I'm going to write my own.' And since in the Huasteca we have the habit of going around singing love songs all the time, well, that was what happened."

RESOURCES

for Further Listening

Los Camperos de Valles: El Triunfo: Sones de la Huasteca. 1992. Música Tradicional, México, MTCD104.

La Huasteca: Huapangos y Sones Huastecos: Los Caimanes (1995) & Los Caporales de Pánuco (1978). N.d. Music of Mexico, 3. Arhoolie 431.

Lieberman, Baruj, Eduardo Llerenas, and Enrique Ramírez de Arellano, producers. 1985. *Antología del Son Mexicano: Anthology of Mexican Sones: Huasteca.* Discos Corason COCD103.

El Son Huasteco: "Viva México": El Viejo Elpidio. N.d. DIMSA CDB-1411.



SONG NOTES

1. El aguanieve – The Mist

This opening track has all the key ingredients of the *son huasteco*: lively, improvised violin, falsetto breaks embellishing the already high-pitched vocal style, *pespunteo* melody-making on the *huapanguera*, and the rhythmic punctuation of dancer Rosa Flores' shoes reinforcing the syncopated guitar strumming. In the instrumental section after the second verse, Marcos Hernández imitates the sound of the dancer's footwork with the clicking of his tongue. In Spanish, *agua* means 'water' and *nieve* means 'snow', but Artemio Posadas feels it refers to "light mist similar to dew," common to the region's weather.

I dream that the abundance / Of the river of my hopes grows.
How to explain / When there are no explanations?
How to stop dreaming / When I notice your features?

To admire your beauty, / I show myself with reserve.
Shaky with sadness, / My lips call your name.
How I miss your head / Lying on my shoulder!

We wove a rainbow / When all was happy.
When you left, we both lost. / And though they be but fancies,
Remember that we loved one another, / Even though you'd like to forget.

Of our world, we made / A pleasant paradise.
I ask, how did our love / End so suddenly,
When together we even dreamt / Of a fruit of your womb (having a child)?

2. El fandanguito – The Little Fandango

A minor key and a descending chord sequence evoke the *fandanguito*'s roots in Spanish musical tradition. Joel Monroy's driving violin adds power to the dark tones of the poetry.

Like a crystalline arroyo, / My verse springs from my breast.
Any moment is more divine / When I am with you, I think,
When I see your eyes, / Or when I kiss your lips.

My heart pierced, / And in the vacuum of my mind
My horizon has become overcast, / As if presaging death.
How to accept resolutely / Living without seeing you?

Stoically, my quest / I have begun to climb.
While I see the sun's setting, / I have come to notice
That your disdain leaves / No beauty in your gaze.

3. El llorar – The Cry

A striking modal $\text{bVII-IV-II}_7-\text{V}_7-\text{I}$ chord sequence and "Ay la la la la la" preceding each two lines of text mark the *son* "El llorar." The opening verse also features the back-to-back falsetto stylings of Joel Monroy and Marcos Hernández.

Tell me, dear, what is wrong? / Better that you cry and calm yourself.
You do not realize that you die / With each passing moment.
So the more that you love her, / The more your hope flees.

If, on its way to the sepulchre, / You see my cadaver pass by,
Don't cry, beautiful creature. / It's better that you get on your knees and pray,
Because at long last I'm relieved / Of my sorrow and bitterness.

The blood flows like burning lava / Through my wounds,
And the spilt tears / Spring like a torrent because of you.
And if this is what they call living, / I don't want to know what death is like.

4. El gusto – The Pleasure

"El gusto" and a few other *sones* have two versions, depending on the key in which they are played. This *re* (key of D) rendition has violin and voice melodic traits that distinguish it from the *sol* (key of G) version of the same *son*. The second verse, and source of the album's name, *El ave de mi soñar*, typifies how imagery of rural life is often used to portray the pain and longing of lost love.

Your indifference is the dagger / With which you widen my wounds.
There are gashes in my heart, / And it makes my back weary,
Because the earth will not swallow up / What is left of my life.

I see endless, immense clouds / Approaching on my horizon,
And the bird of my dreams / Flies lost in the jungle.
Its nest silent, / The mockingbird is without a song.

I softly pronounce your name / Since I saw you leave.
Now my life is a mockery, / An endless labyrinth:
If you knew how the road ahead / Without you fills me with fear!

It was your departure one winter / That froze my senses.
I will live without us seeing one another, / Sentenced to my punishment,
Because those times I spent with you / Were not eternal.

5. La huasanga – Huastecan Fiesta

The extended "ay la la la" immediately identifies "La huasanga." In this and certain other *sones* (e.g., "Aguanieve," "Zacamandú," and "Caimán" on this album), the guitar rhythms and chord changes are "on the beat" during the instrumental sections and shift to "off the beat" during the singing. According to Artemio Posadas, *huasanga* is a Maya-derived word referring



to the *jicaro*, the gourd vine common to the region. This meaning parallels the etymology of Huasteca *tierra de guajes* 'land of gourd plants'. *Huasanga* then would mean 'fiesta in the land of the gourds,' or simply "Huastecan fiesta."

The sad echo of my song / Gets lost in the distance.
You've gone away, and only a cry / Exists, that is agony
That breaks my heart and that dresses / My soul in mourning.

I find myself in my solitude / Asking the silence
To express my feeling, / Why is the cost so great?
Why do I carry you deep inside, / As if beguiled and foolish?

I die with stoic calm, / With pride, facing the sun.
But you will hear / My heartrending song that clamors,
Bequeathing you my soul / And my wounded heart.

It seems that I am sentenced / To see my skies gloomy.
Recalling you saddens me, / But the joy remains with me
Of the many times your lips / Said to me, "I love you."

6. La llorona – The Crying Woman

The minor key and descending chord sequence of this *son* are similar to other "La llorona" pieces in other regional traditions of Mexico.

My sorrows will come to an end / In the tomb. I ask of you
Please do not take flowers: / Let me die in peace;
Let me die in peace, / Much less cry over me.

Oh, my God, what a cruel punishment / If she were not for me.
Concede to me, I ask of you: / To exhale when I die,
To exhale when I die / My final sigh for her.

My sadness has been so great / And my pain so intense
That there is a knot in my throat. / Seeing myself so defenseless,
Seeing myself so defenseless, / Living without you frightens me.

7. El zacamandú

Abrupt rhythmic pauses in the verse and asymmetrical chord sequences mark this *son*. Artemio Posadas relates that years earlier some elderly musicians told him that the non-Spanish word meant *baile a la orilla de un río o en la playa* 'dance on a riverbank or at the beach'. He feels it is related to the *son* "Toro zacamandú" ('Zacamandú Bull') from the neighboring *jarocho* cultural region of Veracruz, and that the abrupt rhythmic stops mark the bullfighter's choreographic passes of the bull. Posadas says that for some *huapangueros*, it is "the king of the *sones*" along with "El fandanguito" [Track 2]. "El zacamandú" tends to be one of the faster-tempo *sones*, along with "La huasanga," "El caimán," and "Las flores." The *zapateo* footwork by Rosa Flores shows the rhythmic connection between the instrumental ensemble and the dancing.

Would that I were to have the gift / To write as you know how.
If God were to give me the key, / I would make my verses of love
And would sing to you like a bird, / As the nightingale trills.

Time goes down its path, / Spreading wisdom.
It treats everyone equally, / Each day wearing us away,
And it will put each of us / In our place, my dear.

Time, history as well, / Will be allied witnesses
That these verses that I write to you / Will be in your memory.
They will be in dedication / To you, a living souvenir.

I would like to be like a breeze / That moistens your hair,
Along with your smile, / The sparkle of your eyes;
And in a gush of caresses, / Let myself be entranced by them.

8. La rosa – The Rose

This minor-keyed *son* is a favorite of the Huastecan tradition. In it, each verse is delivered by a single musician, rather than having alternate lines delivered by alternate musicians, as with many other *sones*.

I've spent wonderful hours / Contemplating the flowers,
Observing their colors. / I can be certain of one thing:
Of all the best flowers, / The rose is the prettiest.

Fragrant rose that bewitches / When your hair moves!
My life goes by quickly; / It no longer has meaning.
Your petals fondle it, / And your thorns wound it.

If life were fair, / My suffering would end;
Directly to God I'd ask, / Before the end arrives,
That he put a little rose / In the center of my garden.



9. La pasión – The Passion

The opening violin segment offers a good example of how Joel Monroy creates melodic tension and resolution with phrasings that depart from and return to the basic rhythmic meter and chordal framework.

Dark woman, you are the spring / In which my verse is nourished.
Impassioned, hurting, / I am immersed in my sadness.
How death is preferable / To this pain so intense!

A constant look of sadness / Is apparent in my demeanor.
I walk in the early morning hours / Intent on forgetting you,
But your sacred image / Pursues me at every instant.

I would like to toss my sadness / Into the sea of passion.
With beseeching pain, / I'd ask of God himself
To rest in the mausoleum / If you were not for me.

You ask not to see me any longer, / But everything continues the same.
I ask you, hurting, / "Why did you give me life?
Why did you give me life, / Only to give me death so quickly?"

10. El triunfo – The Triumph

"El triunfo" is one the minor-key *sones huastecos* most favored by musicians and audiences alike.

Seeing the sunrays / Come out on a new day,
My sigh goes out to you, / And like beautiful poetry
It caresses your profile / And your hair, my beloved.

When it seems like my image of you / Is shaded over, I tremble.
But when our eyes meet, / I contemplate,
And my hope is reborn, / There in the quiet of the church.

I bite my lips until they bleed / From not saying your name.
All has ended, and I lose, / And from now on
Your memory will follow me / Like a martyred shadow.

I met you without seeking you, / I cherished you without having you.
You loved me without giving yourself to me, / I adore you, but without seeing you.
I was born to venerate you, / And I will die because of losing you.

11. La malagueña – The Woman from Málaga

The *son huasteco* repertoire and style have influenced Mexican popular music for over a half century. For example, the popular mariachi version of "La malagueña" derives from the chord sequence, meter, and falsetro singing of its Huastecan predecessor, which in turn has roots in Spanish regional music.

I am jealous of the moon / That admires you each night,
And even though my good fortune / Seems far away and without hope,
I sing to you, one by one, / The rhymes that you inspire in me.

I am trapped and imprisoned / In the snares of memory.
So as not to mourn your kisses, / I firmly bite my lips,
And longing for your return, / I never lose hope.

You, who are all tenderness / And an enchanting woman,
Singing to you today with pleasure / Cures my wounds of love,
And my bitterness drifts away, / And my crying forever.

Because I was faithful with you, / You won't hear even one reproach.
To the contrary, I say to you / That when nighttime comes,
That when nighttime comes, / I call out your name and I bless you.

12. El caimán – The Alligator

The upbeat son "El caimán" has an on-the-beat guitar *rasgueo*. This rendition features violin pizzicato. The elevated imagery of Posadas' lyrics is typical of *son huasteco* poetic style.

You are a lover of the *huapango*, / And your gait is so refined
That I would like to sketch you / Dancing on the floor,
Because you are poetry and art, / And a symphony of rhymes.

When God made you, little creature, / He gave you grace beyond compare.
That is why from his high place / He is there contemplating you
When you move your figure, / Dancing this "Caimán."

When I feel you near, / In a lively *huapango* party,
I am in ecstasy. / Your genteel figure
Is sketched by the wind / In graceful strokes.

13. Las flores – The Flowers

Joel Monroy's skill and trademark style at spinning out a melody comes to the fore in this track. In each instrumental interlude, he adds a rich dose of violin nuances that are, in his words, the "chile that gives the soup flavor."

I carry you in my heart / Because you are my beloved.
For that reason, I eagerly long for you / When you happen to be asleep,
'To adorn your black hair / With the brightest-colored flower.

I sing to you, dark woman, / for being the flower I most love.
More beautiful than the lily, / You are an angel from heaven,
And you perfume my sadness / When I caress your hair.

At dawn, I contemplate / The flowers with their dew.
I confide in them the secret / That you know, woman,
That your heart and mine / Can love each other a lot.

Your name is formed / With four letters, divine flower.
Don't let it sink, / Even though the fog is dense,
And allow me to be the man / Who imagines himself kissing you.

14. El caballito – The Pony

On this track, the recording's producer, Artemio Posadas, plays violin and sings the first verse. The lyrics all come from the repertoire of *coplas* traditionally associated with "El caballito." Posadas explains that Rosa Flores' syncopated dance rhythms falling off the downbeat reflect the Veracruz subtype of Huastecan dance, in contrast to the on-the-beat style of most Huastecan dance.

I am going out into the countryside, / All the way to San Luis Potosí.
Let's see if I can rope / A pony that I saw,
So that I can take a girl from here / For a ride with me.

It's nice to be a cowboy, / Dressed up like a foreman
With his leather vest, / And his lariat for roping,
Roping out in the pasture / To be able to do rope tricks.

If I spend a thousand pesos a day, / I don't feel the strain.
Just forget your concerns. / Get to be my woman
And me kissing your lips, / Even if I go without eating.



Artemio Posadas



NOTAS EN ESPAÑOL

El ave de mi soñar

*Nubarrones sin parar, / veo venir en mi horizonte.
y el ave de mi soñar / vuela perdida en el monte.
y hasta mudo en su nidal / sin cantar está el cenzontle.*

"No sé porqué razón yo me incliné por el son huasteco. Creo que es el falsete lo que me llegó mucho, pues, junto con la profundidad de sus versos."

—Artemio Posadas, músico huasteco y productor de esta grabación.

Una elevada y florida poesía que rememora el anhelo, el placer y el dolor del amor, y que se expresa en el canto a través de quiebres agudos al falsete, son características del estilo clásico del *son huasteco*, una música creada por las gentes de la región nororiental de México conocida como La Huasteca. Artemio Posadas, músico de toda la vida y promotor de esta música, añade que

las ornamentaciones improvisadas del violín, las intervenciones melódicas de la profunda guitarra *huapanguera* y la resonancia única de las cuerdas del trío huasteco son ingredientes esenciales de la tradición del *son huasteco*. Esta grabación representa lo mejor de la tradición que a la vez aísla una continuidad creativa, con las vivaces interpretaciones del trío Los Camperos de Valles y la poesía original de Artemio Posadas.

La Huasteca es una de las regiones culturales más particulares y célebres de México, cubriendo seis estados del noreste mexicano: San Luis Potosí, Veracruz, Tamaulipas, Hidalgo, Querétaro y Puebla (ver mapa). La mayor parte de la región

está cubierta por una llanura que es aprovechada para la ganadería, el cultivo de la caña de azúcar y la extracción de petróleo. Es a su vez hogar de varios grupos indígenas prominentes, entre los cuales están los Tenek (también conocidos como Huastecos), relacionados históricamente con los Mayas del sur de México, y los Náhuatl, conectados lingüísticamente con los antiguos Aztecas. Casi todos los huastecos, sin embargo, son mestizos, miembros del grupo dominante de la población mexicana que surgió de la mezcla de indígenas, de españoles y de aquellos de ascendencia africana traídos como esclavos durante el periodo de la colonización española (1521–1810). El *son huasteco* es una importante expresión de esta centenaria identidad mestiza.

La música llamada *son* emergió durante este periodo formativo de la cultura mexicana, extractando muchos elementos de la rica y variada herencia musical española en la medida en que los conquistadores y los colonos substituyeron sus propios valores y estilos de vida por aquellos de las gentes nativas. En el siglo XIX, escritores mexicanos describieron muchas tradiciones regionales del *son*, concentradas en la franja este-oeste del centro del país más fuertemente poblada por europeos. Una de estas tradiciones era la de los huastecos, quienes, ligados durante siglos por rutas de transporte, actividades económicas, distritos administrativos y otras empresas comunes,

desarrollaron un sentido propio de identidad y de región que incluye tradiciones de música y danza.

Hoy en día, la mayoría de los *sones* cabe dentro de una de estas tres categorías: aquellos ligados a una región, que hacen parte de un repertorio conocido colectivamente como música regional; *sones mestizos*, aquellos asociados con grupos musicales panregionales más profesionalizados e institucionalizados, como el mariachi o la banda de vientos, dispersos por todo México; o los *sones indígenas*. A lo largo de México los indígenas interpretan un repertorio propio de *sones* cercanamente ligados a la danza y el ritual, que se caracterizan por ser muy repetitivos, girando alrededor de una melodía corta para acompañar una procesión nupcial, una danza ritual, una ceremonia devocional u otra actividad.

Los estilos regionales de *son* comparten algún terreno común. La mayoría son vigorosos y con un marcado impulso rítmico muy apropiado para acompañar el baile, mundanos más que sagrados en sus textos, y organizados alrededor de la alternación de segmentos cortos de poesía cantada y secciones instrumentales. Pueden diferenciarse grandemente sin embargo en otros aspectos: por ejemplo en la instrumentación, las técnicas instrumentales, los matices vocales, en el repertorio, y en las danzas que acompañan. El *son huasteco* se diferencia de los otros *sones* en todas estas formas, y en él se le da un énfasis especial a la improvisación

del violín durante las secciones instrumentales. Es conocido también como *huapango*, una palabra que parece derivarse del término náhuatl *cuauhpanco*, que significa "sobre la madera", quizás haciendo referencia al tablado que se le proporciona a los bailarines en las celebraciones rurales. El significado de *huapango*, sin embargo, es más amplio que el *son huasteco* por sí solo. Hace referencia al extenso repertorio de canciones fijas, compuestas en el ritmo del *son huasteco*, cantadas y arregladas en un estilo armónico, así como al más improvisado e impredecible *son huasteco*.

El *son huasteco* es comúnmente interpretado por el trío huasteco, tres músicos cantando y tocando tres instrumentos. El violín lleva la melodía, acompañado por dos guitarras que son exclusivas de la región. La *huapanguera*, también conocida como guitarra quinta, de caja profunda y con cinco órdenes de cuerdas. Usualmente los tres órdenes más graves tienen dos cuerdas cada uno y los dos restantes solamente una cuerda. La afinación difiere de la de la guitarra común de seis cuerdas. Es G¹-D-G-B-E, con un intervalo de quinta justa entre las dos primeras cuerdas y luego descendiendo una quinta justa de la cuarta a la quinta cuerda. Esta afinación crea una sonoridad profunda y llena. La *jarana huasteca* es más pequeña, con cinco cuerdas, afinada G-B-d-f#-a. Su más agudo diapasón y su sonoridad más comprimida pueden ser escuchados claramente, en particular cuando el intérprete

ejecuta efectos especiales como el redoble (un golpe corto hacia abajo y hacia arriba sobre las cuerdas) y el abanico (cuando la mano que rasguea abre los dedos a la manera de un abanico que se desdobra, lazándolos sobre las cuerdas para producir un floreo rítmico). Ambas guitarras son rasgueadas con ritmos y patrones de golpes característicos del *son huasteco*. El estilo tradicional de tocar la *huapanguera* incluye interrupciones ocasionales de *pespunteo*—melodías punteadas en cuerdas individuales—así como redobles y abanicos. El intérprete de *huapanguera* Marcos Hernández, presente en esta grabación, es reconocido por su gran habilidad para el *pespunteo*.

El estilo vocal huasteco se distingue del de los demás *sones* por las voces agudas marcadas por quiebres ocasionales al falsete que ornamentan la melodía. Las voces de dos grandes maestros de este estilo, Joel Monroy y Marcos Hernández, embellecen esta grabación. Los cantantes interpretan melodías tradicionales para presentar versos cortos llamados *coplas*. Casi todas las *coplas* en esta grabación tienen entre cuatro y seis líneas de longitud, frecuentemente con las dos primeras líneas de cada copla repetidas en la alternación de los cantantes. En general, la poesía que se escucha en la interpretación del *son huasteco* puede ser tomada de un repertorio de versos que ya existe dentro de la tradición, puede ser improvisada según la ocasión, o puede haber sido compuesta de antemano.

Los Camperos de Valles

El trío toma su nombre de Ciudad Valles, en el estado de San Luis Potosí. Sus miembros recuerdan que el grupo se formó alrededor de 1974, cuando Joel Monroy se juntó con Marcos Hernández y Héliodoro Copado, los tres veteranos músicos. Copado era considerado uno de los más grandes exponentes de la tradición del violín huasteco. Hernández era un distinguido cantante e intérprete de *huapanguera*. Monroy se había especializado previamente en el violín, pero adoptó la *jarana* para completar el trío. Cuando Monroy se mudó a Tampico, Tamaulipas, para tocar con Los Caimanes, Gregorio Solano tomó su lugar en la *jarana*. Cuando la salud de Copado declinó, Monroy, que había seguido en contacto con los Camperos mientras estaba en Tampico, se unió nuevamente al grupo alrededor de 1995. El grupo ha actuado a lo largo de México y ha recorrido también Inglaterra, Francia, Suecia y España. Frecuentemente visita los Estados Unidos, especialmente las comunidades mexicanas de California y Chicago.

El líder de Los Camperos de Valles, Marcos Hernández Rosales, nació el 25 de abril de 1951 en Tres Lagunas, un pequeño pueblo en la municipalidad de Landa de Matamoros, en el estado de Querétaro. A los 15 años de edad, se trasladó a Valles, donde empezó a estudiar la *guitarra quinta* y a tocar en el grupo de su

tío Fortino Hernández Robles. Su grupo, Los Cantores de la Sierra, estuvo activo por varios años en Valles hasta que su tío regresó a Querétaro. Hernández recuerda haberse sentido inspirado por las melodías de *pespunteo* de Zeferino Galindo, uno de Los Cantores de Pánuco, que actuaba por la estación de radio XESW de Tampico. Galindo fue su modelo, y Hernández ganó su propia reputación como intérprete de la técnica. Toca el *pespunteo* como una forma de exhibición musical, "cuando tengas ganas, cuando te esté viendo la gente".

El intérprete de *jarana* Gregorio "Goyo" Solano Medrano nació y fue criado en la granja conocida como Ejido Zocochuite en la municipalidad de Valles, aproximadamente a ocho kilómetros del centro de Ciudad Valles. Su padre tocaba el violín huasteco en muchas reuniones, incluyendo bailes, fiestas de cumpleaños y bautizos. Alrededor de los doce años, Goyo comenzó a asistir con su padre a esos eventos, marcando así el comienzo de su vida como músico profesional. Así lo recuerda, "Me fui enrolando en el ambiente de la música, primero oyendo. Mi papá me decía poco a poco las pisadas y me fui integrando en el trío después de haber aprendido un poco". Despues de adquirir alguna experiencia tocando la *jarana* con su padre, a los 16 años comenzó a tocar con varios tríos en Valles. Se unió a Los Camperos de Valles aproximadamente en 1979. Le gusta incluir sus propios adornos rítmicos a los rasgueos, y valora la marca individual

que él y otros ponen en su manera de tocar: "No todos tenemos el mismo máñico. Cada quien pone su sello particular. Aunque es muy parecido casi, pero no es igual". También es conocido como trovador, ese cantante que puede improvisar versos, o como él dice, "echar mentiras en las fiestas". Ser un trovador es de gran importancia dentro de la profesión musical.

El violinista y cantante Joel Monroy Martínez procede del pequeño pueblo de El Retén, en San Luis Potosí, en los límites con Querétaro, donde nació el 13 de julio de 1949. Su abuelo Mateo era violinista, y uno de sus tíos tocaba la guitarra y la jarana. Joel recuerda cuando interpretaban piezas ahora casi olvidadas llamadas *minuetos* en los velorios. Su interés por la música huasteca lo llevó a la edad de doce años a seguirles los pasos a los músicos por velorios, bailes y otros eventos. Aprendió así a tocar el violín, imitando a otros, "oyendo nada más. Hasta la fecha nadie me dice 'sale así y sale así'". Se mudó a Valles a los diecisiete años y se unió con los músicos locales para conformar trios, entre los cuales estaban Los Cantores de la Sierra, integrados por él, Marcos Hernández, y el tío de Marcos, Fortino. A pesar de que comenzó a tocar música en el violín, empezó a aprender la jarana para integrarse a Los Cantores de la Sierra. Cuando Fortino dejó Valles, Monroy tocó con Marcos y el violinista Heliodoro

Copado en Los Camperos Huastecos, que luego se llamaría Los Camperos de Valles. Después de haber dejado Valles durante varios años para trabajar en Tampico, se integró de nuevo a Los Camperos en 1995. Joel tiene un estilo de falsete impactante, fuerte y claro. Recuerda su vacilación cuando comenzó a aprenderlo: "Cuando estaba en el rancho, siempre quise hacer eso, y me daba vergüenza". Pero el escuchar el falsete grupo Los Hermanos Calderón le dio confianza: "y así pa' allá empecé, y así hasta la fecha ahora". Habla con convicción sobre la importancia de los estilos de falsete y el violín huasteco para capturar la esencia de la música: "El falsete es muy importante. Si no tiene falsete, es como cantar cualquier canción. El huapango tiene que llevar falsete". Y acerca de los matices rítmicos y melódicos del violín huasteco dice: "Si no le pones chilito al caldo, no tiene sabor".

Artemio Posadas Jiménez produjo esta grabación, seleccionando el repertorio y los músicos, y componiendo la mayor parte de los textos. Nació el 27 de diciembre de 1948 en el rancho de Ábreo en la municipalidad de Guadalcázar, en aquella región del estado de San Luis Potosí que es hogar de otro estilo de *son*, el *son arribeño*. En reuniones sociales, su padre interpretaba en el violín el estilo de *son arribeño*. Sin embargo, cuando la familia se mudó a la ciudad capital de San Luis Potosí cuando

Artemio tenía diez años, él se enamoró del *son huasteco*. "No sé por qué me sentí atraído por el *son huasteco*. Yo creo que fue el falsete lo que en realidad me llegó, junto con la profundidad de su poesía", dice. Eventualmente comenzó a tocar instrumentos y pasar el tiempo con músicos huastecos, permaneciendo largas horas en el bar El Comercio en la ciudad costera de Tampico, donde muchos de ellos se reunían. Viajó a lo largo de la Huasteca, buscando los mejores intérpretes y los mejores maestros, incluyendo el trío Los Camperos de Valles. "Cuando yo los conocí, era Joel tocando la jarana, Marcos la quinta y Heliodoro Copado el violín", recuerda. En 1979 se trasladó a California, donde ha tocado y enseñado el *son huasteco* en el East Bay Center de Richmond y de manera privada. Ha acompañado a muchos grupos de danza, dentro de los que se cuentan Los Lupeños, Xochipilli, Flor de Esperanza, y el Grupo Mestizo. Ha organizado *fandangos* y patrocinado músicos procedentes de la Huasteca.

En esta grabación, Posadas compuso todos los versos excepto aquellos de "El Caballito", que recoge su texto de la tradición. Enfatiza que al componer los versos, uno debe incluir al menos uno que tenga relación con el título del *son*, como puede escucharse en "La rosa", "Las flores", y "El caimán". Posadas toma inspiración de las experiencias de su propia vida. "Se conjugaron varias cosas. Llegó

el amor, y luego el desamor. Llegó la nostalgia". Sentía que no podía expresarse tan plenamente como quería a través de los versos huastecos que ya existían dentro de la tradición. También advirtió que la tradición estaba comenzando a petrificarse cada vez más, con todos los cantantes interpretando los mismos versos. "Entonces fueron varios elementos que se juntaron para decir, pues, 'yo voy a hacer los míos'. Y como tenemos característica de la Huasteca que por dondequiera que vayamos siempre estamos cantando versos de amor, entonces, eso fue el resultado".

1. El aguanieve

El corte inicial tiene los elementos claves del *son huasteco*: la vivacidad, las improvisaciones del violín, los quiebres al falsete que adornan el ya agudo estilo vocal, la elaboración melódica del pescuento en la *huapanguera*, y la puntuación rítmica del zapateo de la bailarina Rosa Flores que refuerza el rasgueo sincopado de la guitarra. En la sección instrumental que viene después del segundo verso, Marcos Hernández imita con un chasquido de la lengua el sonido del trabajo que hace la bailarina con los pies. A pesar de lo preciso del término aguanieve, Artemio Posadas cree que más bien hace referencia a la "llovizna tenue parecida al rocío" que caracteriza el clima de la región.

2. El fandanguito

Una tonalidad menor y una secuencia de acordes descendentes evocan las raíces del fandanguito en la tradición musical española. El recio violín de Joel Monroy acrecienta el poder de las tonalidades oscuras de la poesía.



3. El llorar

Una impactante progresión modal de acordes $\text{bVII}-\text{IV}-\text{II}_7-\text{V}_7-\text{I}$ y el "Ay la la la la la" que precede cada una de las líneas del texto, marcan el *son* "El llorar". El verso inicial también presenta la constante alternación continuo estilo de falsete de Joel Monroy y Marcos Hernández.

4. El gusto

"El gusto" y otros pocos *sones* tienen dos versiones, dependiendo de la tonalidad en la que son tocados. El violín y la voz de esta versión en re tienen rasgos melódicos diferentes de la versión en sol del mismo *son*. El segundo verso, que da origen al nombre del álbum, *El ave de mi soñar*, muestra cómo las imágenes de la vida rural se usan con regularidad para retratar la pena y el añoranza por el amor perdido.

5. La huasanga

Un prolongado "ay la la la" identifica inmediatamente "La huasanga". En éste y algunos otros *sones* (vg., "Aguanieve", "Zacamandú", y "Caimán" en este álbum), el ritmo de la guitarra y los cambios armónicos suceden sobre el tiempo durante las secciones instrumentales y se desplazan a contratiempo durante las secciones cantadas. Según Artemio Posadas, *huasanga* es una palabra derivada del maya que hace referencia al jícaro, una calabaza común en la región. *Huasanga* entonces significaría "fiesta en la tierra de los guajes" (calabazas) o simplemente "fiesta huasteca".

6. La llorona

La tonalidad menor y la secuencia de acordes descendentes de este *son* se asemejan a las de otras "lloronas" procedentes de otras tradiciones regionales mexicanas.

7. El zacamandú

Este *son* se caracteriza por las pausas rítmicas abruptas y las secuencias de acordes asimétricas. Artemio Posadas cuenta que años atrás algunos músicos ya mayores le dijeron que el significado de esta voz no española era *baile a la orilla de un río o en la playa*. Él por su parte cree que está relacionado con el *son* "Toro zacamandú" de la vecina región jarocha de Veracruz, y que las súbitas interrupciones marcan los pases del torero. Posadas dice que para algunos de los *huapangueros* éste es el "rey de los *sones*", junto con "El fandanguito" [Corte 2]. "El zacamandú" tiende a ser uno de los *sones* de tempo más rápido, junto con "La huasanga", "El caimán", y "Las flores". El zapateo de Rosa Flores muestra la conexión rítmica entre el ensamble instrumental y el baile.



8. La rosa

Este *son* en tonalidad menor es uno de los preferidos de la tradición huasteca. En él, cada verso es interpretado por uno de los músicos, a diferencia de otros muchos *sones* en los cuales los cantantes alternan líneas en la presentación de cada verso.

9. La pasión

La sección de violín con que se inicia este *son* ofrece un buen ejemplo de como Joel Monroy crea tensión melódica y luego la resuelve con fraseos que parten y retornan a la estructura rítmica básica y la progresión armónica.

10. El triunfo

"El triunfo" es uno de los *sones huastecos* en tonalidad menor que más aprecian músicos y audiencias por igual.

11. La malagueña

El repertorio y el estilo del *son huasteco* han influenciado la música popular mexicana por más de medio siglo. Por ejemplo, la popular versión mariachi de "La malagueña" se deriva de la secuencia armónica, la métrica y el canto con falsete de su antecesora huasteca, que a su turno tiene raíces en la música regional española.

12. El caimán

En el alegre *son* "El caimán", el rasgueo de la guitarra cae sobre el tiempo fuerte. Esta versión presenta además el violín en pizzicato. Las imágenes poéticas del texto de Posadas son típicas del estilo del *son huasteco*.

13. Las flores

La habilidad de Joel Monroy, con su el estilo característico de desarrollar una melodía, se destaca en esta pieza. En cada interludio instrumental, añade una rica dosis de matices en el violín que son, en sus propias palabras, "el chilito que le da sabor a la sopa".

14. El caballito

En esta pieza, el productor de la grabación, Artemio Posadas, toca el violín y canta el primer verso. El texto completo viene del repertorio de *coplas* tradicionalmente asociado a "El caballito". Posadas explica que los ritmos sincopados del baile de Rosa Flores, que caen a contratiempo, reflejan el estilo secundario veracruzano de la danza huasteca, que contrasta con el estilo a tiempo que caracteriza la mayor parte del baile huasteco.



CREDITS

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RECORDED BY Mary Ann Zahorsky, Boomtown Studios, Sausalito, CA

MIXED BY Pete Reiniger

MASTERED BY Charlie Pilzer, Airshow, Springfield, VA

ANNOTATED BY Daniel Sheehy

TRANSLATIONS BY Carolina Santamaría

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SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS PRODUCTION SUPERVISED BY Daniel Sheehy and D. A. Sonneborn

PRODUCTION MANAGED BY Mary Monseur

EDITED BY Jacob Love

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ADDITIONAL SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS STAFF: Carla Borden, editing; Richard Burgess, marketing director; Lee Michael Demsey, fulfillment; Betty Derbyshire, financial operations manager; Toby Dodds, technology manager; Mark Gustafson, marketing; Ryan Hill, fulfillment; Helen Lindsay, customer service; Keisha Martin, financial operations assistant; Margot Nassau, licensing and royalties; John Passmore, manufacturing coordinator; Jeff Place, archivist; Amy Schriefer, program assistant; Ronnie Simpkins, audio specialist; John Smith, marketing and radio promotions; Stephanie Smith, archivist; Norman van der Sluys, audio-engineering assistant

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el ave de mi soñar

Los Camperos de Valles - Mexican Sones Huastecos

Hard-edged violin improvisations, driving guitar, and soaring falsetto vocal excursions mark the son huasteco. Raised on Huastecan ranches in northeastern Mexico, the Los Camperos de Valles trio are acclaimed international ambassadors of their regional style of music. *El ave de mi soñar* (The Bird of My Dreams) fuses age-old repertoire, masterful arrangements, and the original poetry of musician-poet Artemio Posadas to create a deeply traditional, yet highly creative, monument of Mexican music. 44 MINUTES, 32-PAGE BOOKLET, ENGLISH LYRICS, BILINGUAL NOTES.

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