VALEIRIO LONGORIA
“Caballo Viejo”
Over 60 Minutes of Classic Tex-Mex

1. Me Vas a Olvidar (4:05) (Ranchera) vocal: Valerio & Flavio
2. El Canoero (4:27) (Cumbia) vocal: Valerio
3. Pá Que Me Sirve La Vida (4:00) (Ranchera) vocal: Flavio & Valerio
4. Por Retener (3:32) (Bolero) vocal: Valerio & Flavio
5. La Repetida (2:23) (Polka) (Valerio Longoria) instrumental
6. Alza La Cara (3:38) (Cumbia) vocal: Valerio
8. Caballo Viejo (2:56) (Cumbia) vocal: Valerio
10. Ojos Verde Mar (2:38) (Bolero) (Gonzalo Curiel) vocal: Valerio & Flavio
11. El Polquero (2:37) (Polka) (Valerio Longoria) instrumental
12. El Arrancate (2:32) (Redova) (Valerio Longoria) instrumental
13. El Zoquetal (1:45) (Polka) (Valerio Longoria) instrumental
14. Alas Quebradas (2:44) (Peruviano) vocal: Valerio
16. Esa Mujer (3:50) (Ranchera) vocal: Valerio; accordion: Flavio
17. El Lucero (2:34) (Huapango) accordion: Valerio 4th
18. Estoy Perdido (3:12) (Bolero) vocal: Valerio & Flavio

Valerio Longoria – accordion & vocals
Valerio Longoria Jr. – bajo sexto & vocals
Flavio Longoria – alto sax & vocals
Valerio Longoria 4th – drums

Recorded in San Antonio, Tx. at Toby’s Custom Recording Studios, Toby Torres – engineer, November 1989;
Produced by Chris Strachwitz & Valerio Longoria & family
Cover photo by Philip Gould

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Valerio Longoria

Ask any of the leading San Antonio "conjunto" accordionists from the formative years of the early 1950's which player was the most innovative and respected in the eyes of musicians as well as the public and the answer will inevitably be Valerio Longoria. He has always been regarded as a musician's musician. An excellent singer, he introduced the bolero to the San Antonio conjunto repertoire of traditional polkas, waltzes, and redovas. He was also one of the first popularizers of the Mexican "Canción Ranchera" in conjunto music and the first to use drums. Valerio played a wider repertoire than most of the other local musicians and explored the use of different accordions and keys. In recent years he has introduced authentic "Cumbias" from Colombia played in haunting minor keys to the Texas dance hall scene.

By the late 1940's, accordion, or "conjunto music," had become the most popular musical genre among Mexican Americans in South Texas. The musical groundwork had already been laid: out in the country, on the ranchos, on the dusty streets of the little towns and barrios. Narcisco Martinez, Bruno Villareal, Jose Rodriguez, Jesus Casiano, Lolo Cavazos, and in San Antonio, Santiago Jimenez, they were the pioneers of the music and on phonograph records in the 1930's and '40's along with the countless others whose names and music did not appear on record labels, juke boxes, or radio programs. During the booming post-war years of the late 1940's and early '50's a new generation of players, including Valerio Longoria, began to provide the music at the many cantinas, dance halls, and social functions where the snappy polka and waltz rhythms of the accordion became a popular attraction.

Born on a cotton plantation in Clarksdale, MS on December 27, 1924, Valerio Longoria spent his early childhood in Kennedy, TX. There were seven brothers and one sister in the family when the parents divorced in 1928. Valerio, along with his sister and one of the brothers, lived with his father, (originally from Guerrero in the border state of Tamaulipas), who worked in the fields as a migrant laborer. For several years the Longorias lived in Chicago but by the time Valerio was seven years old they were back down in the Valley working in the fields near Raymondville, Texas. There Valerio got his first button accordion for which his father, who did not play music himself, paid $10. Valerio began to play at parties and remembers a time when he was hired to play an all-night street dance. He sat on a platform and played while the dancers swirled about in the dusty street. He was paid $4 for the night's work. The lower Rio Grande Valley was already a rich agricultural region when Valerio was a child and he usually worked in the fields along side his father. In 1942 Valerio joined the US army in San Antonio. Upon discharge from the service in 1946, he made his first recording and was the first artist on Manuel Rangel's new Corona label. On these recordings, and at his nightly appearances, Valerio pioneered the new sound of the accordion accompanying traditional duct singing in San Antonio. He continues to be an innovator today. With two sons and a grandson, the family "conjunto" plays the most varied repertoire of any accordion group in Texas.

"Mi Tierra" on West Commerce Street used to be a small restaurant and behind it to the south were lots of beer joints, bars and dance halls. Valerio recalls: "We played every night in those beer joints - used to make $52.50 per week besides tips. I was hired by the bars. I played with a lot of different compañeros."

One of Valerio's early influences was Narciso Martinez, whose recordings he listened to and learned from. He began playing a wide variety of music traditionally not heard on the accordion, even jitterbug and swing numbers. He also heard and loved boleros and was the first to transpose bolero melodies to the accordion. "We called this music 'Conjunto Music' - we did not hear about Norteño music. Norteño music is from Mexico, it's corridos. In Mexico they did not use accordions. The accordion first came out here in Texas. The mariachis did not like us accordion players. I played with only a guitar or bajo. Then I had a guy with a drum beating behind me in the Valley. I liked playing music - God gave me this gift."

"In '59 I went to Chicago for the first time on my own - stayed there for 8 years. I recorded there with Firma Records. I made very good records for Firma. Corona paid me $15 per record - for two tunes. In Alice, Texas we recorded with Marroquin for Ideal. Ideal was in San Benito. One time I got a check for $60 from them - that's all. Falcon actually paid me some royalties, probably for the songs I wrote. I never went to Mexico but I know they played my records especially in Monterrey, Matamoros, Reynosa, and even in Mexico City. I was well known in those times on both sides of the border, but no one was willing to help me even though I feel I play better than most of the guys who made a lot of records. I feel I have more talent to play more variety of material than all the others. I can play German polkas and I can play Peruanos.

I went to Miami - and returned to Chicago. I was up on the Canadian border, I went to Colorado, Idaho, Phoenix, Los Angeles, Oregon, Washington, to San Jose. I played in all those places. We knew a lot of people from Texas were there. When we went from Phoenix to Los Angeles I ran out of money. My boy broke his leg but I made a dance in Los Angeles and took in $1500 - there were so many people from Texas there. I made more dances. Everywhere I went, they wanted to record me. In Chicago, in Los Angeles for Vulcan, in Florida, in San Jose, etc. I make mostly instrumental Polkas - because I don't write that many songs myself. I also recorded for Oro, with Treviño in Florida, he had Reloj."

"My oldest son is 38 years old, Valerio Jr., born in San Antonio, and my youngest son Flavio was
I played all the instruments with my dad, drums in the bars, then bass, and finally the bajo sexto. We played lots of music—but we also worked in the fields, potatoes in Idaho, tomatoes in Illinois, then little jobs in bars or dances. In Oregon we worked in the fields again. We lived in Chicago—then we were in Los Angeles for a while—and in Florida. We recorded there for Reloj. I was already playing bajo by then—ever since I was 15 years old. My dad taught me everything I know. I would go to school a little here and there. Never went to school, really—never did go to high school, just a little here and there.

They stole my first bajo sexto in Florida. I liked it there though—in Miami—with all those Cubans—dog races and such. A lot of people would go over there from Texas to work. Just like when we went up North, there were many Tejanos. It was not right in Miami—but out in the country. Arturo Caminante heard us in San Antonio and contracted us to come to California—and we recorded a little for Discos Fama.

I was married in 1971. My wife used to play in the school band—and my kids play music. I started playing accordion when I was 2 years old. I started playing accordion when I was 4. I started playing accordion when I was 8. We all traveled together. After he was born we did not travel as much. But we stayed over in California for seven years. The recordings we make help us the most. My father recorded so much and all his records are done well.

My dad has always tried to change with the times. The old timers don’t change but my dad, although he started out with a few of the bands. His music is so modernized—he keeps up with La Onda (the wave). We stay in the tradition mode but we like to play other types of Latin music. When we record cumbias, we try to put that Latin or Salsa taste in there—and use tropical instruments. La Mafia and La Sombra de Chicago are the favorites of the younger generation, my kids. I have two girls: one plays violin, the other plays clarinet. Laura Ann, the violinist, likes country music more than our conjunto music, but I have some plans to put her in the band. She’s a nice voice too... La Sombra uses accordion sometimes—with keyboard, and guitar instead of the bajo. Their roots are with Ysidro Lopez, Beto Villa, and Little Joe. I worked for 3 years engineering for Joe Lopez at his studio—I learned a lot from R.V., he was a good engineer. Also met and recorded many groups: Los Aguilares, Flaco Jimenez, and La Mafia.

In the history of Tex-Mex Conjunto music after World War II three names stand out as the ones who made the most lasting impact on the tradition: Tony De La Rosa, Paulino Bernal, and Valerio Longoria. Valerio was the first. His first recording was an old corrido: "Chavela," also known as "Jesús Cadena." The flip side was a polka: "La Callejera." The next session for Cor-
Valerio Longoria always had a more sophisticated urban sound than those from out of Texas. He became one of the finest accordionists in San Antonio and began to teach accordion at the Guadalupe Cultural Center.

Valerio Longoria received the national Heritage Award for his contributions within their traditions. He's currently active in the South Texas dance hall scene and looks forward to meeting new friends.

Valerio Longoria always had a more sophisticated urban sound than those from South Texas. He loved to play boleros and found a more receptive audience in San Antonio and other cities. By the mid-1950s Valerio was recording extensively for Ideal Records, headquartered in San Benito but with Mr. Marroquin of Alice, Texas as the main director of artists and repertoire — A&R as it was known in those days. Mr. Marroquin had an extraordinary ear for talent in this region and only picked the best artists recording them so that the records sounded good on the juke boxes. Frank Cantú was along as singer and songwriter during the first part of Valerio's stint with Ideal. The records poured out and obviously Valerio was a popular attraction in bars and at dances throughout South Texas.

During the 1960's and '70's Valerio Longoria moved around a lot, and these were apparently lean years. In the 1980's Valerio returned to San Antonio and began to teach accordion at the Guadalupe Cultural Center. Juan Tejeda started the San Antonio Conjunto Festivals (held annually in mid-May) and has often featured Valerio as one of the real pioneers. In recent years Valerio has returned to San Antonio and began to teach accordion at the Guadalupe Cultural Center.

In the early 1950's Valerio Longoria began to record for Mr. Wolf's RIO label, another small firm which made their recordings in the back of Wolf's record shop on West Commerce Street and distributed them locally. Fred Zimmerle was still loved to play boleros and found a more sophisticated urban sound than those fromouth Texas. He became one of the finest accordionists in San Antonio. Valerio, along with Frank Cantú contributing songs and the second voice, recorded many of Cantú's compositions which have become standards in conjunto music, such as "El Rosalito" and "Negro Destino." They also recorded the timely "Corrido de Korea."
4. POR RETENERTE
Me cuesta creer que no es mentira
que estás aquí después de tanto tiempo,
si en algo que yo daba por mentira,
de que un día volviéríamos a vernos.
Yo quiero saber hoy de tu vida,
si eres feliz como dice la gente,
si en algo que yo daba por mentira,
dejaste de amarme, fracasaste,
resignado estaba a vivir sin ti,
pero llegaste.
Deja que me embriague con tus caricias,
con tu pecho abierme cierra
mi herida,
brindaame el sueño que me negaste,
hazme feliz.

6. ALZA LA CARA
Si yo pudiera adivinar qué estás pensando,
va a la noche levantará la cabeza.
Como no puedo adivinar qué estás pensando,
la noche le da la culpa.
¿Qué tienes? ¿De qué te vienes esta tristeza?
¿Qué sientes? Que yo te miro y estás llorando.
¿Qué tienes?
Alza la cara y mirame a mí,
oよりも tu pensamiento.
Al cabo yo te puedo servir
pa’ calmar tu sufrimiento.

7. JACINTO RAMOS
En San Antonio, Texas, miren lo que ha pasado:
mataron a Jacinto por andar de enamorado.
Jacinto Ramos era valiente y atrevido,
valiente y atrevido, porque era bien parecido.
Solteras y casadas, gueritas o morenas,
para Jacinto Ramos todititas eran buenas.
Un sábado en la noche
tocó la mala suerte
de que Jacinto Ramos se topara con la muerte.
Habían hecho un baile
todo por el Casiano,
y en ese baile andaba la mujer de Feliciano.

8. CABALLO VIEJO
Cuando el amor llega a ti de esta manera
uno no se da ni cuenta
el sauce reverdece
e l Guamachito florece
y las hojas se revientan
caballo va a la sabana
porque está viejo y cansado
él no se da cuenta
si un corazón ha pasado
y si una potra lo asalta
un pecho viejo te encuentra
y no se da cuenta
Cuando el amor …
Uno no tiene la culpa,
quererse no tiene horario,
ni verse en el calendario.
Cuando las canas se juntan
el viejo da tiempo al tiempo
porque el viejo levanta valla
porque está viejo y cansado
él llega por la mañana
con su pasado apurado a verse
y con su potranca que
lo tiene embarbachado,
el viejo da tiempo al tiempo
porque le sobra la edad
caballo viejo no puede perder
la flor que le da
porque después de este
tiempo no hay ya otra oportunidad.
9. NEGRA TRAICION
¡Por qué lloras, amigo querido?
Ya no lloras por esa mujer.
Si algún día te cambia la suerte,
que te encuentres con otro querer.
De rodillas te he visto llorando
y de rodillas te he visto rezar,
y pidiéndole al cielo clemencia
que te quite de tanto pensar.
Hay mujeres que tienen conciencia,
hay mujeres que tienen valor,
de entregarle al hombre su cariño,
y le entregan de plano su amor.
Pero amigo, ya no le hagas caso,
ella es causa de ruina,
te ha robado el cariño,
la infame,
te ha jugado una negra traición.

10. OJOS VERDE MAR
Son tus ojos verde mar,
dos gotitas de agua clara,
pedacitos de cristal
de verde luz que iluminó tu cara.
Naufragué en el verde mar
luminoso de tus ojos,
pero al fin pude alcanzar
la playa ardiente de tus labios rojos.
Verde mirar, en mi vivir,
verde mirar, en mi esperanza.

15. EL TROQUERO
Yo soy troquero y me gusta ser borracho
soy parandero y me gusta enamorar.
Carga dinero pa’ gastar con mis amigos
y en las cantinas no me gusta panteear.
Por todo el valle todititos me conocen,
alá en McAllen voy a gozar del amor.
En San Benito también tengo una güerita,
y en Santa Rosa me encontré una nueva flor.
En Corpus Christi, y en Laredo y San Antonio
solo se goza de la gloria y la ilusión.
Sirvan las otras de cerveza
y yo me tomo otra polka en la acordeon,
por Dios santo, que por mí la pulpa es pecho,
y a esa criatita me la llevo en mi camión.
Yo soy troquero y soy un triste navegante,
soy como el ave que se cria de flor en flor.
Cargo dinero
y soy feliz con mi rolante,
yo soy muy engreído y peleo por un amor.

16. ESA MUJER
Esa mujer no es para mí
y nunca fue, ni será para mí,
esa mujer.
Ayer la vi, la vi pasar,
me dijo adiós, pero no, no,
no es igual.
Es tan bonita la mujercita,
me gusta tanto con su sonrisa,
para mí no hay otra más bonita
que esa mujer.
Que me trate bien, que me trate mal,
para mí toditito me da igual,
ella es todo un sueño, en realidad, esa mujer.
Esa mujer no es para mí
y nunca fue, ni será para ti, esa mujer.

18. ESTOY PERDIDO
Estoy perdido y no sé qué camino
me traigo hasta aquí.
Estoy vencido y seré mi destino
sufrir hasta el fin.
Llevo aquí en mi pecho
el remordimiento de mi proceder,
pues me duele el alma,
vivo con la angustia de tu padecer.
Hoy me arrepiento de haberlo dejado
tan sola y sin mí,
tanto he sufrido que hasta en mi delirio
me acuerdo de ti.
Hoy vivo solo en el mundo sin ti,
no sé si pueda volverte a besar,
y como niño me pongo a llorar
porque ya te perdí.

19. NEGRO DESTINO
Yo sé bien que tú ya ni te acuerdas
cuando yo te adoré con fervor,
cuando estabas muy dentro de mi alma
y gozabas de todo mi amor.
Hoy me acuerdo y me da sentimiento,
me emborracho y quisiera llorar
por la ingrata que amaba en un tiempo,
que de un hombre se quiso burlar.
Hoy te miro nómadas de pasada,
de que el brazo vas con mi rival.
He de verte en el callejón
y en tu pecho clavado un puñal.
No pierdo la esperanza de verlo,
que otro te haga sufrir y llorar,
y cuando andes sufriendo y penando,
de mi nombre te vas a acordar.
Qué bonito es el campo y las flores,
que bonito es el cielo y la mar,
que de veras se sabe amar.
Pero a ti te gustó otro camino,
despreciaste un sendero legal.
Sigue pues con tu negro destino
que te lleva así al vicio y al mar.
Valerio Longoria
"Caballo Viejo"

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Valerio Longoria - accordion & vocals
Valerio Longoria Jr. - bajo sexto, vocals, & bass
Flavio Longoria - alto sax, vocals & bass
Valerio Longoria 4th - drums

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