FLACO JIMENEZ "Flaco's Amigos"

1. LA TUMBA SERA EL FINAL (Bolero) • (Vocal: Fred & Flaco) (A)
2. THE FREE MEXICAN AIR FORCE • (Vocal: Peter & Flaco) (B)
3. LUCERITO (Ranchera) • (Vocal: Flaco & Toby) (B)
4. DID I TELL YOU • (Vocal: Oscar & Flaco) (B)
5. PARA TODA LA VIDA (Ranchera) • (Vocal: Fred & Flaco) (A)
6. ESPERO TU REGRESO (Bolero) • (Vocal: Flaco) (B)
7. I'M GONNA LOVE YOU, LIKE THERE IS NO TOMORROW • (Vocal: Peter & Flaco) (B)
8. JENNETTE (Instrumental) • (Mandolin: Ry) (C)
9. MI PRIMER AMOR (Ranchera) • (Vocal: Fred & Flaco) (A)
10.YO QUISIERA SABER (Ranchera) • (Vocal: Fred & Flaco) (A)
11.POQUITA FE (Instrumental Bolero) • (Slide Guitar: Ry) (C)
12.ATOTONILCO (Instrumental Polka) • (C)
13.TE QUIERO MAS (Bolero) • (Vocal: Fred & Flaco) (A)
14.LA FERIA POLKA (Instrumental) • (C)

Executive producer: Chris Strachwitz
Cover Photo: Al Rendon
Design: Elizabeth Wei

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ARHOOm CATALOG
10341 San Pablo Avenue - El Cerrito, Ca. 94530 USA
In 1979 I was encamped with The Free Mexican Air Force somewhere in South Texas. We used to listen to Norteno, Tex-Mex style music broadcast out of San Antonio over our "ghetto-blaster" as we sat around the campfire late in those magic Texas nights. The most persistent, passionate sound was Flaco Jimenez y su conjunto, and so late one Sunday evening we climbed in the pick-up truck and headed down to San Antone to hear Flaco at Irene Y Fidelo Cantina, on the outskirts of town.

I brought along my mandola and after enjoying six sets of rockin’ Tex-Mex, with every other song dedicated on my behalf, Flaco and I began to jam in the parking lot, sitting on the tailgate of the truck. The Texas moon was full and we played “music of the falling stars” as Flaco called it. As we played “Never On Sunday” an intoxicated hombre wove his way over until he stood almost between us, swaying slightly in the warm breeze. As we finished with a flourish and smiles all around, the entranced aficionado let out a “grito” and threw up an entire four course “Mexican Special Plate” all over our shoes before passing out with a beautiful smile on his face. It was a sublime moment and we serenaded him in his slumber before calling it a night.

Since that night I have been honored to share in some of Flaco’s international musical triumphs as a friend and musician. We have made a few records in the States and England and I am tickled to be in such fine company again on THIS one!

Flaco you deserve it all, because you give your soul completely, holding nothing back. Amigo, I’m always ready to play “una mas” with you; and “gracias” for the new shoes!
I remember the sunrise in Edinborough, Scotland after an all night Jam session following a concert. We stood on the sidewalk just before dawn, and as Flaco played a slow air, our host danced a graceful jig. He turned to Flaco with tears in his eyes, recognizing the melody as Scottish, having come back home all the way from South Texas. As we stood in the cool dawn, looking at "Archer's Seat" above Edinborough town, I realized Flaco's greatest gift: to let each listener rediscover the common thread of unchained melody, each in their own language. Gracias amigo, viva la Musica; el gueto es mio!

(Peter Rowan)

It's been a privilege to play with Flaco—I've thought that the greatest thrill in music is to meet up with somebody who's different and go on a little trip—you might make some kind of discovery together. Flaco was always ready to set out, on foot, pretty much of the time—and he really takes me to a place that is special. He does it with elegance and style, and I think we have played some great music that gets better along the pathway.

(Ry Cooder)

Leonardo "Flaco" Jimenez has played a lot of dances and made a lot of recordings during his more than 30 year career as a popular "conjunto" accordionist in Texas. During the past 15 of these years Flaco has received some recognition from musicians and folk music fans outside of Texas. In his home town of San Antonio Flaco is usually taken for granted but in 1987 the city, its media, and public gave Flaco Jimenez a huge welcome when he returned from Los Angeles after winning a GRAMMY in the best Mexican-American Category for his Arhoolie album "AYE DEJO EN SAN ANTONIO" (3021). Thanks largely to the tireless efforts of Juan Tejeda of the Guadalupe Cultural Center, San Antonio has been honoring and recognizing the wonderful cultural and musical contributions made by the "conjunto" or Norteno musicians of South Texas at the annual Conjunto Festival in May. After generations of dancers and party goers have nurtured and kept this tradition alive, the world at large is beginning to notice these delightful, danceable sounds coming from a simple diatonic accordion and the duet voices. Los Lobos have made the contemporary music world aware of conjunto music. Linda Ronstadt is now bringing Mexican country music to the masses with the help of the mariachi tradition. Mexican American music is finally beginning to be noticed outside the usual chicharron circuit.

Flaco's previous recordings have all been with his own conjunto, bringing you a good sampling of what you would hear at his dances. This recording came about when Flaco's long time friend and musical collaborator Ry Cooder offered Flaco several selections which he had recorded together to be used on Flaco's next album (session C). Ry plays mandolin on "Jennette" and slide guitar in the style of Santo and Johnny on "Poquita Fe". The two polkas represent wonderful examples of the "Monterrey sound" with the close harmony between the accordion and alto sax with Ry supplying the solid bajo sexto accompaniment. Flaco has enjoyed his role as a sideman with Ry Cooder's band enormously because it has given him the opportunity to explore new musical genres and sounds. In this setting Flaco has been able to play the part of the pure musician rather than facing the pressures and demands of his usual role as leader and vocalist.

With his friend Peter Rowan, Flaco's role has also been the "combiner", as he puts it, but more to underscore the fine voice of Peter Rowan, who comes from the Bluegrass and Folk tradition but is also beginning to explore other more esoteric styles.

I requested the new version of "The Free Mexican Air Force" and Peter came up with the haunting new song "I'm Gonna Love You" which had just about all of us crying. During this session Flaco also taped a couple of songs featuring his own present-day sound. On the duet number LUCERITO he is joined by Toby Torres who was a mainstay and vocal partner of Flaco's conjunto in the 1960s. During the same session Flaco's current bajo sexto player Oscar Telles is heard throughout and sings on the English "Did I Tell You."

In contrast to these outings into the realms of Anglo and World music with Ry Cooder and Peter Rowan, Flaco has long been an admirer of the "god-fathers" of Norteno music: Los Alegres de Teran. About a year ago Flaco and his old vocal partner Fred Ojeda (who was his duet singer in the 1970s when Les Blank and I filmed him for the documentary Chulas Frongteras) recorded ten songs associated with and popularized by Los Alegres de Teran (session A). Fred takes the lead (Tomás Ortiz' role) and Flaco sings the higher segunda part (Eugenio Abrego's). I was absolutely taken by the hauntingly pure sound of these songs and am grateful to Joey Lopez for making five of them available for inclusion on this album.

Thanks, Flaco! And thanks to your amigos: Fred Ojeda, Peter Rowan, Ry Cooder, Oscar Telles, Toby Torres, and all the members of the conjuntos for making this lovely record possible.

(Chris Strachwitz - March 1988)
1. La tumba será el final
Luchan por separarnos, pero es inútil, nuestro amor es tan grande, como no habría jamás.
Juntos caminaremos hasta la muerte, y aunque el mundo se oponga, nos tendremos que amar.

Coro
La tumba será el final, allí será la separación; y hasta en la tumba te sigo amando si quiere Dios.

Mienten y te aseguran que no te quiero, solamente a mi madre la quería más que a ti.
Ella que nos bendice de aliado del cielo, me lo dijo en un sueño que serás para mí.

Coro:
1. It Will All End In the Grave
They try to keep us apart, but it’s useless, there will never be another love like ours. We’ll be together until in death we part, even though the world be against it, we must love each other.

Chorus:
It will all end in the grave, that will be our final separation; though if God is willing, even there I will keep on loving you.

They lie when they tell you that I don’t love you, I loved only my mother more than I love you.

Coro:
3. Lucerito
¿Dónde estás lucerito de mi alma? que en las noches te vivo soñando. Tú me dices que te siga esperando--¿hasta cuándo te voy a esperar?
Inolvidable te llevo en mi mente, esperando de ti una esperanza. Ya mis brazos te esperan con ansia de llevarte conmigo al altar.

Chorus:
When I spoke those loving words to you; I was only telling the truth. I wanted you in my arms, I wanted you forever.

But you were only looking for a one night stand. You went looking for trash on a clean swept lot.

Coro:
5. I Wanted You Forever
When I spoke those loving words to you; I was only telling the truth. I wanted you in my arms, I wanted you forever.

But you were only looking for a one night stand. You went looking for trash on a clean sweep lot.

Chorus:
When I love, I give all of my love, and I give it ‘til the day I die. If I were only interested in a little fun, I’d find love in the nearest cantina.

Coro:
5. Para toda la vida
Cuando te hablé de cariño, jamás te dije mentira. Quería tenerte en mis brazos, pero por toda la vida.
Y tú querías aventura; tomaste muy mal camino.
6. I Await Your Return
My love, why are you going so far away?
Why are you stealing my existence?
if you know you’re carrying inside you
the warmth of my kisses .

Don’t forget that I await your return
and am longing to kiss you again.
Chorus:
My love, why are you going so far away?
Don’t forget that I await your return
and am longing to kiss you again.
Chorus:
My love, why are you going so far away?
Don’t forget that I await your return
and am longing to kiss you again.

9. My First Love
You know, my love, why I’m crying,
because I love you, because I adore you.
You know I’ve never forgotten you,
because you were my first love.
Chorus:
I spend my hours, my days, my years,
suffering all alone, my dear gal, your deception.
You know I’ve never forgotten you,
because you were my first love.
Chorus:
I love the perfume of the flowers,
always a reminder of your love.
Listen, oh fresh and enchanting breeze,
you make me dream of your smile.
Chorus:

9. Mi primer amor.
Sabes vida mía por qué lloro,
porque te quiero, porque te adoro.
Sabes que nunca te he olvidado,
porque tú fuiste mi primer amor.
Coro:
Paso las horas, paso los días, paso los años
sufriendo a solas, chatita mía, tu desengaño.
Sabes que nunca te he olvidado,
porque tú fuiste mi primer amor.

10. I Would Like To Know
I would like to know how you feel
when you aren’t with me...
if in the depths of your soul
there doesn’t throb for me a thought.
We love each other, my life, my heaven,
with faith and with crazy passion...
and in silence we kiss each other
as a vow of our love.
If destiny, traitor and coward (that it is),
were to separate us, then let the shattered pieces of my life be
scattered afar by the wind,
then let the memory of our love
be erased from the world,
and let your name be written across
the heavens with my blood.
I would like to know who has
loved you as I do...
if in my arms you feel so happy
and you scream it out to the heavens.
You caress me, you squeeze me, you kiss me
with deep tenderness,
and the sobs that rise out of your soul
say to me: “I love you.”
and the sobs that rise out of your soul
say to me: “I love you.”

13. Te quiero más
Cuando me duermo, te estoy soñando;
despierto para pensar en ti.
Cuando trabajo te estoy mirando,
cuando platico, nada es de mí.

Nunca jamás podré abandonarte;
he de seguirte por donde vas.
Si no me quieres, yo sí te quiero;
si me desprecias, te quiero más.
(Éstas dos se repiten)

Cuando te enojas, yo soy la calma;
si estás alegre, todo es cantar.
Así como eres, así te quiero;
aunque no quieras, yo te he de amar.
13. I Love You More

When I fall asleep, I’m dreaming of you, and I wake up just so I can think about you. While I’m working, I see only you, when I make conversation, it’s never about myself.

I could never ever leave you, and I must follow you wherever you go. If you don’t love me, I do love you, and if you spurn me, I love you all the more. (These last two lines are repeated)

When you get angry, I am calm, and when you’re happy, life’s a song. Just as you are, that’s how I love you, and even if you don’t wish it to be so, I must always love you.

So if you tell me: “Yes, I love you,” and if you demand that I love you more, then I’m a sailor and you’re the star of my hope in the middle of the sea. And on that night when the moon shines, I return to feel your love all the more.
Flaco Jiménez
"Flaco’s Amigos"

1. LA TUMBA SERA EL FINAL (F. Vidal) (Bolero)
   (Vocal: Fred & Flaco) (2:45)
2. THE FREE MEXICAN AIR FORCE (Peter Rowan)
   (Vocal: Peter & Flaco) (4:45)
3. LUCERITO (Santiago Jiménez) (Ranchera)
   (Vocal: Flaco & Toby) (2:34)
4. DID I TELL YOU (G. Povey, A. Meyers)
   (Vocal: Oscar & Flaco) (2:34)
5. PARA TODA LA VIDA (Ranchera)
   (Vocal: Fred & Flaco) (2:44)
6. ESPERO TU REGRESO (D. Garzes) (Bolero)
   (Vocal: Flaco) (3:00)
7. I’M GONNA LOVE YOU, LIKE THERE IS NO TOMORROW (Peter Rowan)
   (Vocal: Peter & Flaco) (3:24)
8. JENNETTE (Harold) (Instrumental)
   (Mandolin: Ry) (4:20)
9. MI PRIMER AMOR (Ranchera)
   (Vocal: Fred & Flaco) (2:37)
10. YO QUISIERA SABER (G. Parra)
    (Ranchera) (Vocal: Fred & Flaco) (2:55)
11. POQUITA FE (Instrumental Bolero)
    (Slide Guitar: Ry) (4:19)
12. ATOTONILCO (Polka)
    (2:11)
13. TE QUIEREO MAS (Bolero)
    (Vocal: Fred & Flaco) (2:48)
14. LA FERIA POLKA (Instrumental)
    (2:12)

Total time: 43:15

Executive producer: Chris Strachwitz
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