

# **150 Years (mas o menos) of Mexican Music in Tucson**

An Overview

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# Tucson's Mexican American Population

Source: Los Tucsonenses, by Tom Sheridan.

**Table 1. Tucson's Population, 1860-1940**

<b>Population</b>	<b>1860*</b>	<b>1880*</b>	<b>1900*</b>	<b>1920†</b>	<b>1940†</b>
Total	925	7007	7531	20337	36818
Hispanic	653	4469	4122	7489	11000
Hispanic Percentage	70.6	63.8	54.7	36.8	29.9

\*Population figures from the computerized files of the federal census manuscripts, Mexican Heritage Project, Arizona Heritage Center, Tucson.

†Population figures from Dr. James Greenberg, Tucson Project Research, Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology, Department of Anthropology, University of Arizona.

# Musical Groups of the 1800s

- Orquestas (social)
- Bandas (military)
- Choral music (Catholic Church)
- Conjuntos (early mariachi groups)
- Single musicians

# Musical Styles of the 1800s

- Salon music (fox trots, waltzes, mazurkas etc. )
- Military Band music
- Corridos
- Jarabes and other folk forms
- Opera and Classical music

## Early Music instructors (late 1870s)

- E. Medina
  - Lazaro Valencia
  - F. Escobar –”Professor of Instrumental and Vocal Music”.
- 
- Source: Los Tucsonenses, p. 195.

# Early Orchestras (1880s)

- Southern Pacific Brass Band, organized among railroad machinists by Anton Grosetta.
- Basilio Hernandez's Orchestra (popular in late 1880s.)
- Lazaro Valencia's Orchestra (formed with Manuel Montijo, owner of a local lumberyard and one of Tucson's most energetic music aficionados).
- Source: Los Tucsonenses, p. 195.

# Angela Peralta, Opera Diva



## **Fred Ronstadt's Club Filarmonico (formed in 1888)**

- Members included a handful of young men who would become the leaders of Tucson's Mexican community, including Lucas Estrella, Genaro Manzo, Santos Aros, Carlos Jacome, Rufino Velez, F.J. Villaescusa and a number of other local businessmen or politicians.

# Federico Ronstadt

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# Club Filarmonico de Tucson



Fred Ronstadt's *Club Filarmonico* (ca. 1896)

# Early entertainment venues

- The Concordia (on S. Meyer)
- Levin's Park
- Carrillo Gardens/Elysian Grove
- El Teatro Royal
- El Teatro Carmen
- Tucson Opera House
- The Rialto

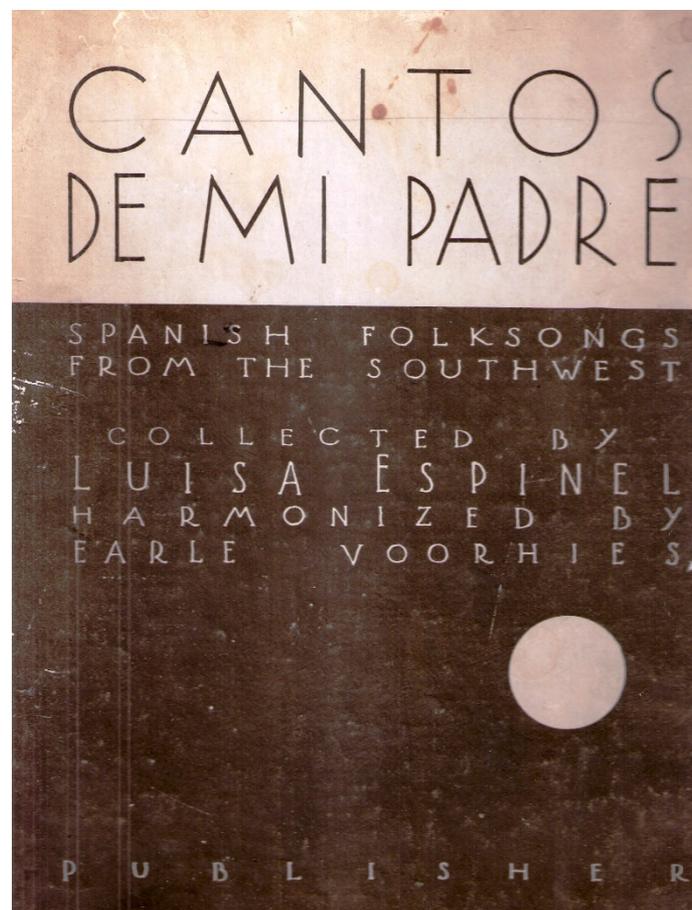
# Luisa Espinel, actress, singer, folklorist and Linda Ronstadt's tia...

- Born Luisa Ronstadt, daughter of Federico Ronstadt and Sara Levin, in Tucson in 1892.
- She studied music in San Francisco, Paris and Madrid.
- At the height of her popularity, she was referred to as a “glamorous Spanish diseuse (story teller or fortune teller)”...
- She was a folklore scholar, who specialized in the folklore of Spain. She also taught music.

# Luisa Espinel in her youth



# Spanish Folksongs from Southern Arizona...



# Luisa Espinel's Canciones de Mi Padre

- Originally self published as “Cantos de Mi Padre” and later published by the University of Arizona as “Canciones de Mi Padre in 1946.
- Espinel notes that many of these songs were composed in the Altar valley by men of humble background with no musical training but with a natural talent for melody. “Like minstrels they would journey from hacienda to hacienda, singing and using the guitar or a little native harp for accompaniment”.

# Canto de Cuna, a page from Cantos de Mi Padre

CANTO de CUNA  
(CRADLE SONG)

COLLECTED BY LUISA ESPINEL  
ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY  
ELEANOR HAQUE

HARMONIZATION BY  
EARLE VOORHIES

ANDANTE CON MOTO  $\text{♩} = 69 \text{MM}$   
DOLCISSIMO

19

PP  
CON PEDAL

CON INNOCENZA

Ar-ri-bayn el cie-lo Es-ta-u-na ven-ta-na,  
There's an op-en win-dow High up in God's heav-en,

pp *more* *meno*

Por don-de se-a-so-ma Se-ño-ra San-ta A-na  
Where Saint Anne the bles-sed Watch-es lit-tle chil-dren

Lu - lo que lu - lo que San Cam-a-  
Lu - lu now lu - lu now sing dey

# Arizona at the turn of the Century

- The Alianza Hispanoamericana is founded in part to protect the Mexican American community and to provide death insurance benefits for its members. It also worked to preserve the Mexican culture.
- Arizona becomes a state in 1903.
- The Mexican Revolution causes mass migration to Arizona and other Southwestern States. Mexican immigrants continue to influence the culture.
- Mining, farming and railroad work are primary means of employment.
- Labor strife. (strikes, deportations, discrimination). Music in the form of corridos documents some of the major events. Spanish language newspapers such as El Tucsonense also document events.
- Between 1900 and 1920, the Mexican American population in Tucson doubles while the rest of the population more than triples in size. By 1920, Mexican Americans are no longer the majority.

# El Tucsonense



# Some popular orchestras and bands of early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Tucson

- Southern Pacific Banda de Musica
- Quintero Popular Mexicano
- Orquesta Navarro
- Orquesta Leon
- Orquesta Tipica Mexicana
- Gayo Jazz Orchestra

# Santa Rita Spanish Orchestra



The Santa Rita Spanish Orchestra (1920)

# “Culture” in Tucson...



# Teatro Carmen

- Founded by Carmen Soto Vasquez
- Active between 1915 and 1922.
- Seating capacity was: 1,400. It was Tucson's largest and most elegant theater.
- During its most active years, the Teatro presented a variety of dramas, zarzuelas, comedies, operettas, sainetes (short burlesque farces) and musical concerts

# El Teatro Royal



# Mexican Americans in classical music

- Classically trained music teachers of Mexican descent included: Espiritu Arriola, Rosa Jacobs, Manuel Gutierrez, Amado Lozano, Carlos Ramirez and Jose Servin.
- Manuel Montijo was a music teacher who gave private lessons and who taught at St. Joseph's Academy. When the Tucson Symphony was formed, he joined as its first bass player.

# Tucson Symphony Orchestra



# The Old Pueblo Mexican Orchestra



—Photo by Buehms  
THE OLD PUEBLO MEXICAN ORCHESTRA—A WPA PROJECT

THE CITY RECREATION DEPT. & THE PIMA COUNTY  
WELFARE BOARD PRESENT IN CONCERT

## *The Old Pueblo Mexican Orchestra*

Clarence Wollard  
Director

Rodolfo Quijada  
Concert Master

Filiberto Quintero  
Conductor

2:30 p. m.

Program for Sunday Jan. 27, 1935

- 1.—TIERRA BLANCA-March.
- 2.—MARIA DE LA LUZ-Waltz.
- 3.—MALA MUJER-One Step.
- 4.—REINA LILLY-One Step.
- 5.—LUZ-Waltz.
- 6.—CIELO AZUL-Sung by 4 Troubadours.
- 7.—SANGRE MEXICANA-Paso Doble.
- 8.—EL CARRETERO-Guapango.
- 9.—AMOR IMPOSIBLE-Schottisch.
- 10.—JESUSITA-Polka.
- 11.—CUATRO MILPAS-Sung by 4 Troubadours.
- 12.—1181-March.
- 13.—LA GOLONDRINA-Sung by Troubadours.
- 14.—EL RANCHO GRANDE-Sung by Troubadours.
- 15.—RIMMEL-Sung by Mario Escamilla.
- 16.—LA BORRACHITA-Sung by 4 Troubadours.
- 17.—MAMA INEZ-Sung by 4 Troubadours.
- 18.—MIL NOVECIENTOS DIEZ Y OCHO-Paso Doble.

This concert broadcast over K. G. A. R. from 3:00 to 4:00 P. M. for  
the benefit of the "shut-ins" thru the courtesy of the  
TUCSON MOTOR SERVICE COMPANY

"Public address system donated thru courtesy of  
GRABE ELECTRIC CO.

Programs Furnished by Courtesy of

**EL  
TUCSONENSE**

TUCSON'S ONLY SPANISH NEWSPAPER

# By the late 30s...

- Radio becomes very popular.
- Jacinto Orozco hosts “La Hora Mexicana” on KVOA Radio.



DON JACINTO OROZCO

Director

## LA HORA MEXICANA

5-7:30 A.M. Daily

3 P.M. Mon. thru Fri.

BIG LIVE TALENT BROADCAST

1-4 PM Saturdays

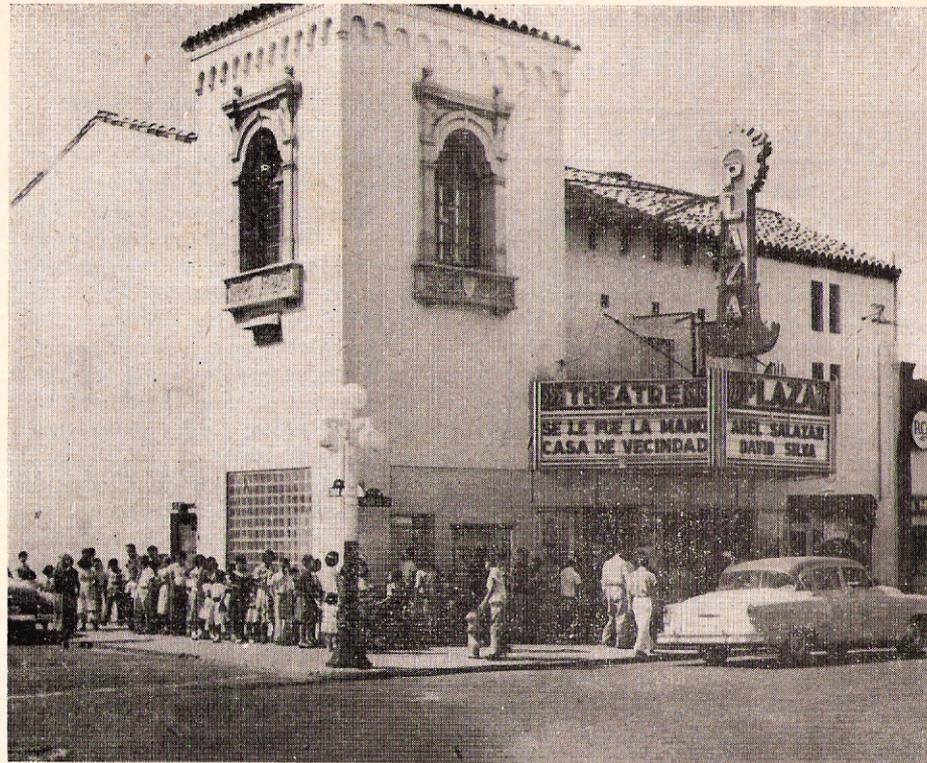
1290 on your dial

CELEBRATING 15 YEARS (with) KVOA

# Mexican Cinema comes to Tucson

- By the late 30's movie houses were abundant in downtown Tucson and included the Fox, The Lyric, the Rialto, and the Plaza..
- Mexico began its golden age of cinema in the late 30's and became quite popular in cities and towns like Los Angeles and Tucson. Mexican ranchera music was featured in films like Alla En el Rancho Grande.

# El Cine Plaza



**CLUB INFANTIL.** — He aquí una vista parcial de los seiscientos jovencitos de Tucson, Arizona, que acudieron a la primera función cinematográfica efectuada en el Teatro Plaza, bajo los auspicios de la Aftianza y con el objeto de organizar el Club de Niños. En esta misma página publicamos una reseña de dicho acontecimiento.

# Now playing...

**PLAZA**

EL TEATRO DE NUESTRA COLONIA

**AHORA EXHIBIENDO**

En el alma de la costa mexicana—en  
los labios de una cancion

**"La Orilla de un Palmar"**  
con  
VICENTE ORONA y MARIA TAMAYO

—TAMBIEN—

Evita (Chachita) Muñoz

**"Morenita Clara"**  
con  
MARGARITA Y ARTURO SOTO  
MARGARITA MORA y ARTURO SOTO RANGEL

ADEMAS

Nuevas—Cartun—Episodio

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**DESDE DOMINGO, SEPT. 5**

La Pelicula Que Han Estado  
Esperando Ver

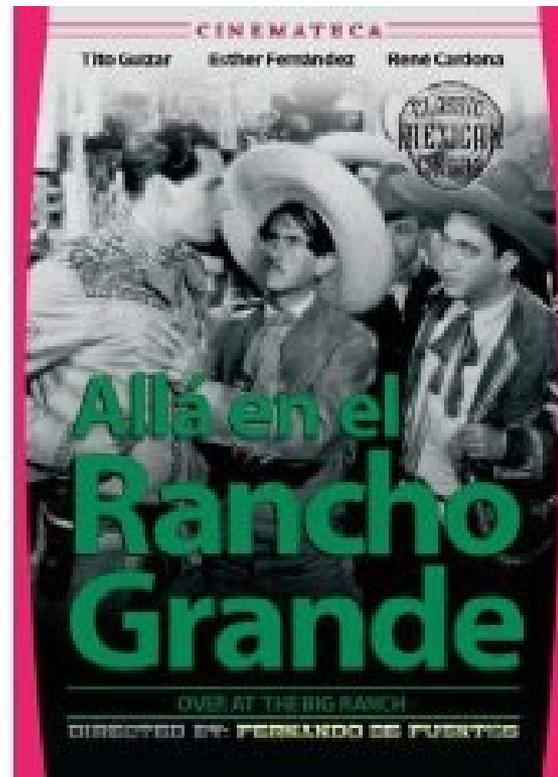
**"Juan Charrasqueado"**  
con Pedro Armendariz  
La mejor pelicula que han hecho en México

ADEMAS

Una Pelicula Corta De

**Cantinflas**  
y otras peliculas cortas

# One of the first películas rancheras...





# Lalo Guerrero

- Lalo Guerrero was born Tucson's Barrio Viejo in 1916.
- He learned the guitar from his mother, who was said to have a very lovely voice.
- In the thirties, he formed a group called Los Carlistas, who performed in Tucson for several years.
- He wrote several very popular songs, including "La Cancion Mexicana", which became a bit hit for Lucha Reyes, a popular Mexican recording star and actress.
- He moved to Los Angeles and eventually opened his own restaurant.
- He's recorded hundreds of songs, most of which he wrote himself. Many of his songs are parodies, and others are more on the political side.
- He won the Presidential Medal of Freedom in the 1990s.

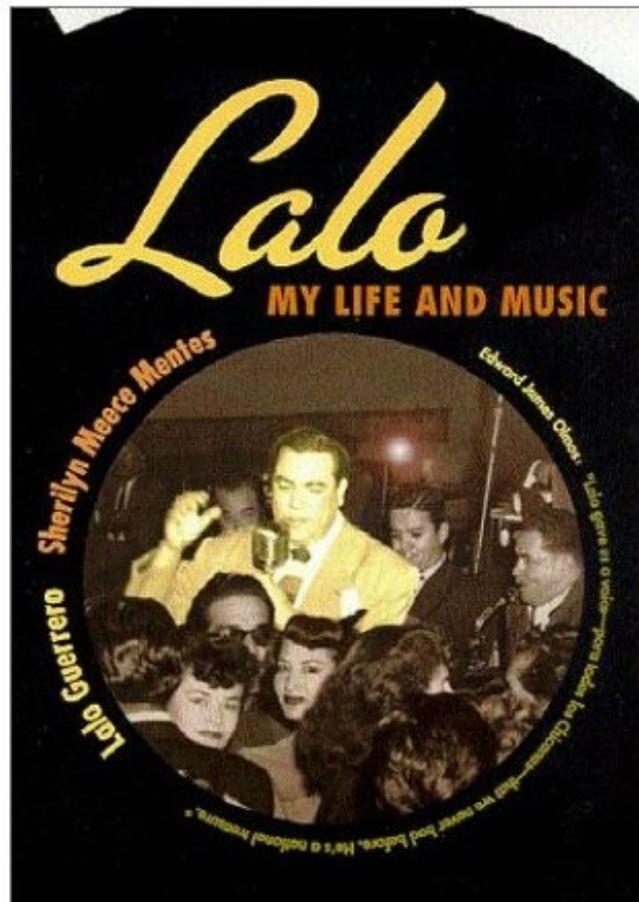
# Lalo Guerrero and Los Carlistas



# Lalo in his prime...



# Lalo's Autobiography



# Lalo in front of his old barrio home



# Where's the party??



# El Casino's legendary dance floor



**ELCASINOBALLROOM**  
Avenida 2da y Calle 26  
Adolfo C. Laustanau, Gerente  
*El Salon de Baile mas comodo y amplio en esta Ciudad  
En este Casino se celebran actualmente las  
Fiestas Patrias Mexicanas del  
15 y 16 de Septiembre!*

# The Del Rio...



# Fiestas!



FOTO TOMADA la noche del 15 de Septiembre en el Casino Ballroom, después de la coronación. De izquierda a derecha: Steve Corrales del Club Belmont; Princesa Lidia Gutiérrez del Club Esmeralda; Hno. Alberto Pérez de la

Logia No. 100; Reina Sophie Molina del Club Cienna Logia No. 38; Randy Carrillo, Princesa Gloria Paredes del Club Azalea Logia No. 74, y Gilbert Félix del Club Cuauhtémoc.

**FIESTA MEXICANA**  
en **LA PLACITA** Calles Broadway y Court  
DE LA  
**TUCSON FESTIVAL SOCIETY**  
**SABADO 16 DE ABRIL DE 1955**  
Empezando a las 6 de la Tarde  
**Musica - Bailes - Mariachis - Variedades**  
**Puestos, Desde Comida hasta Curiosidades**  
NO DEJE DE ASISTIR A ESTE MAGNO FESTIVAL



# Local Dance Bands

- Louis Leon and His Orchestra



Louis Leon, front, right, and his orchestra kept 'em dancing for more than 40 years.

# La Orquesta Nuñez



# Los Elegantes

Presenting the New  
**LOS ELEGANTES**



JOIN US DURING OUR  
10¢ COCKTAIL HOURS  
4 to 7 p.m.

Entertaining Nightly except Mondays  
8 to 1

a smooth Latin-American ensemble with  
a real Modern Sound playing for your  
dancing and listening pleasure featur-  
ing Jimmy Vindiola, Frank Perez, Ro-  
mando Delgado and Frank Catalano.

Entertainment **SHOWCASE** of Tucson

**Gus & Andy's**  
**CRYSTAL PALACE**

2000 Miracle Mile      Phone 624-2801

# The Ramblers

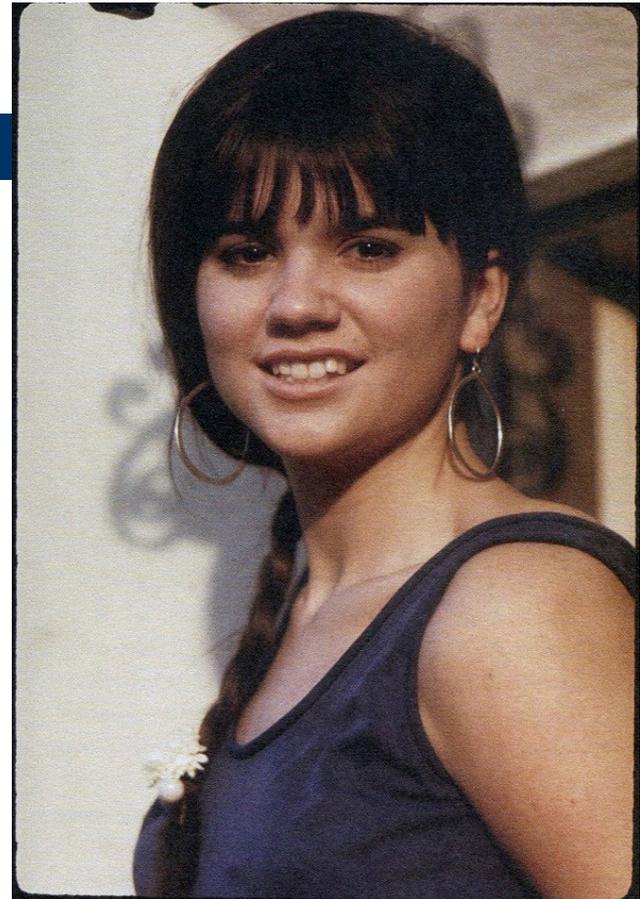
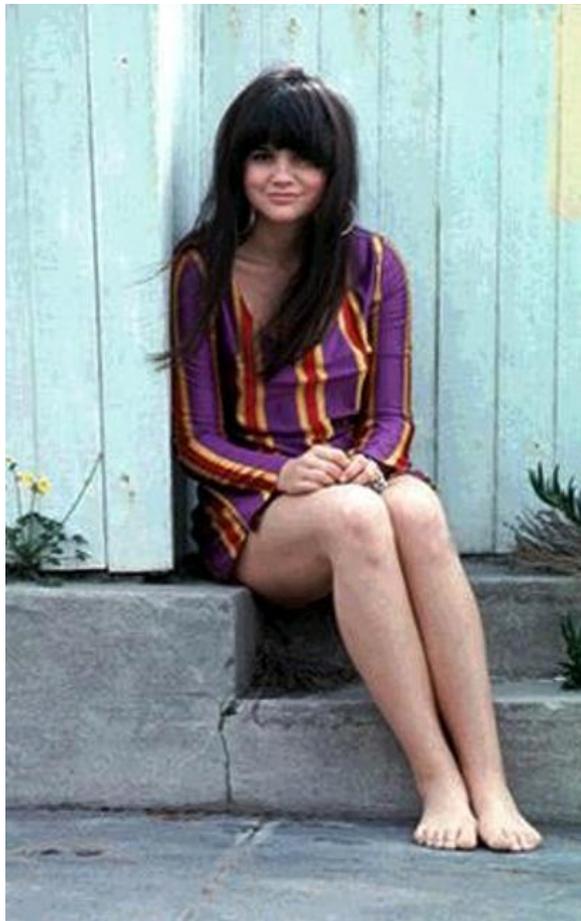


"The Ramblers" (above), who play regularly at the Latin-American Club at 146 So. Main, will donate their music on Friday, Dec. 16, when the Latin-American holds its 28th annual Christmas benefit dance. "The Ramblers" will furnish dance music from 9 pm to 1 am and the admission fee is 75¢ per person. The total collected from admissions for this non-profit enterprise will be donated to the Donstock Children's Hospital for crippled children. Join the fun this Friday at the Latino where "The Ramblers" will entertain you with the music you like, for they play everything including Mexican and Latin-American styles, Corridos,

Rock 'n Roll and just about anything you want to dance to... and, you have the satisfaction of knowing you are helping a worthy cause. Some of the recipients in the past 27 benefits have been students who received scholarships for college, Tucson Boys Club, Cerebral Palsy and Arizona Children's Home, just to mention a few. Club officers for 1955 are: Harry Cooper, pres.; Santos Andrade, V.P.; Alvaro Alvarez, Sec.; M. V. Morales, Treas.; and the Board of Trustees are A. Sandoval, Emilio Carrillo and Frank Ullas. The new business manager for the club is Edward Montiel.

**The Ramblers: Bottom, from left, Frank Vargas, Dickie Marmion. Top: David Foust, Raul Castro, Frank Catalano, Gilbert Guerra.**

# Linda Ronstadt



# Mariachi

- Mariachi music is said to have originated in the town of Cocula, Jalisco, Mexico. It's been documented that it was first played as early as the 18<sup>th</sup> century.
- Mariachi music became very popular in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Mexican radio and cinema helped to popularize the mariachi sound.

# Mariachi Tucsonense, one of Tucson's earliest mariachi groups



# One of Tucson's musical treasures



LOS CHANGUITOS FEOS

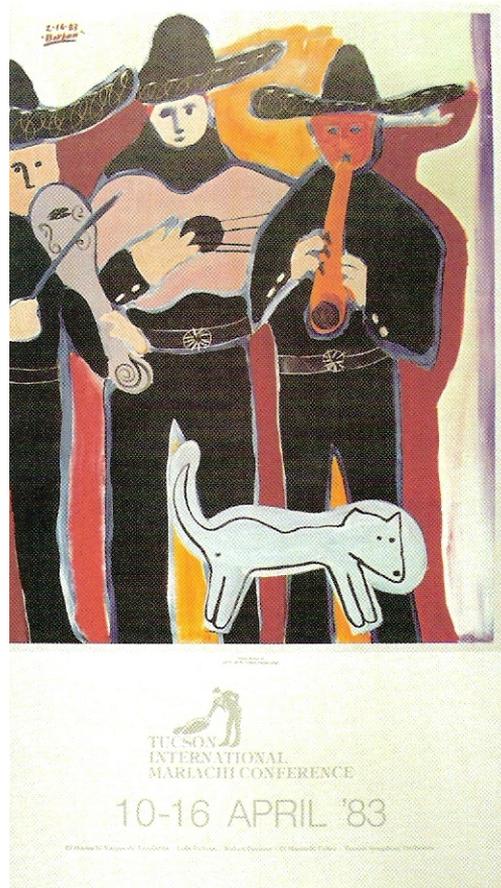
# Mariachi Cobre



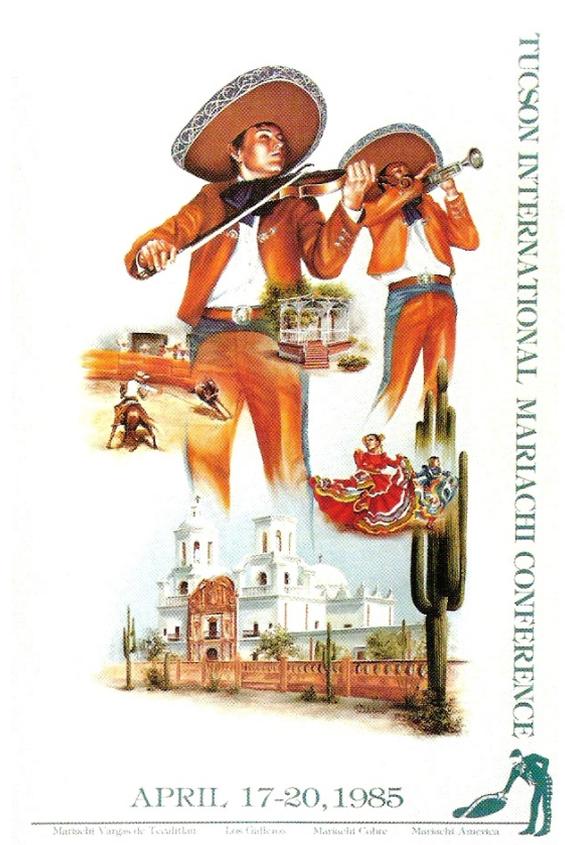
# The Tucson International Mariachi Conference

- While San Antonio is known for having the very first mariachi conference, the Tucson International Mariachi Conference for many years held the record for being the longest running and largest mariachi conference in the world. It all started in 1983. There were many individuals involved in its formation, including members of Mariachi Cobre.

# The first conference poster...



# The 1985 concert poster



# Linda Ronstadt re-born



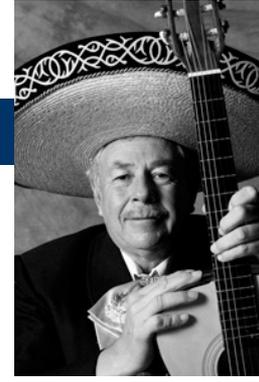
# Tucson Musicians Museum Hall Of Fame



Carlos Saldivar



Jose Yerba



Alfredo Valenzuela



Louis Leon



Ruben Moreno



Tony Garcia

# Contemporary Tucson

- Los Cuatro Vientos
- Calexico
- Sergio Mendoza y la Orquesta
- Mariachis everywhere...in restaurants, elementary schools, high schools, casinos...
- Ted Ramirez and the Santa Cruz River Band

# Mariachi Luz De Luna



# Los Cuatro Vientos



# Calexico



# Los Gallegos



# Guillermo “Bubba” Fass



# Tucson Music Museum Hall of Fame Member Alfredo Valenzuela



# Davis Elementary School Mariachi



# Conclusion

- Mexican music in Tucson is alive and well.
- It's critical that our musical history gets documented.
- We have to do this ourselves, since this is our culture and our history. You can do this too.
- Use the Library and the Historical Society. Search in old newspapers and read history. Talk to your friends and relatives, especially your elders. Ask them questions about music and any memories they have of it.