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May/mayo 20, 2011 Spanglish Lazo Cultural Edition Vol. 7, No. 5 (LP1)

Special Edition of La Prensa for Lazo Cultural



Photo by Celso Rodriguez

Conjunto Crossroads: Jimmy Bejarano Sr. inducted into Texas Conjunto Hall of Fame

By Kevin Milliken,
Special to La Prensa

May 16, 2011: If ever there is a good time for a musician to retire, it's while he is still on top.

Fresh from being named to the *Tejano Conjunto Hall of Fame* on Thursday, May 12, 2011, *Santiago "Jimmy" Limón Bejarano, Sr.* of Fremont, Ohio is hanging up his accordion after more than five decades at the helm of a number of bands, including the latest incarnation of *Los Cuatro Vientos* (The Four Winds), one of *conjunto* music's groundbreaking and trendsetting bands.

"It feels real good," said Bejarano, while returning to Ohio from the festivities in San Antonio. "It really felt good sharing that with my two sons [Jimmy Jr. and Rubén]."

"I was speechless. I had tears in my eyes," echoed Jimmy Jr. of his

father's induction. Bejarano becomes just the second musician outside of Texas to join the hall of fame. There are 65 inductees overall.

Los Cuatro Vientos gave one of its final performances last week during the Hall of Fame Induction Gala at the *Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center* in San Antonio, Texas. Bejarano was inducted into the hall of fame at the same ceremony, which preceded the 30th annual *Tejano Conjunto Festival* held this past weekend.

San Antonio radio station *KEDA, 1540AM*, also celebrated its 45th anniversary in March, and invited Bejarano and his band to come perform there. It turns out that was the last public concert *Los Cuatro Vientos* played.

TejanoFM.com will honor Bejarano on May 29

There are just two more performances on the band's

schedule: a private wedding reception next month, and an annual *Tejano music festival* at Centennial Terrace in Sylvania, Ohio during Memorial Day weekend. That performance on Sunday, May 29, 2011 will be broadcast live on the Internet at www.tejanofm.com

Conjunto is the more traditional music genre of the two, which usually features musical acts consisting of an accordion, bajo sexto (12-string guitar), bass guitar, and drums. *Tejano music* can involve a wider range of instruments beyond those four, including keyboards, electric guitars, and electronic drums, as well as saxophones and trumpets.

Bejarano's retirement greatly affects his family's future, too—because sons Jimmy, Jr. (bajo sexto) and Rubén (drums) also play in the band. In fact, Jimmy, Jr. has played the 12-string guitar

(Continued on Page LP3)

Latinoamericana registra avances y retrocesos en derechos

BRASILIA (AP) 12 de mayo de 2011: América Latina logró en el último año avances en la protección de los derechos humanos de grupos vulnerables, como indígenas, afrodescendientes y mujeres, pero persisten graves abusos perpetrados por fuerzas de seguridad en la región, advirtió la organización Amnistía Internacional en su informe anual.

El documento destaca progresos en algunos países sudamericanos en el castigo de militares responsables de torturas durante las dictaduras militares de los años 60 y 70, pero esas mejoras coexisten con un clima de impunidad y falta de acciones para castigar a los abusadores de derechos humanos en algunos países.

Amnistía Internacional (AI) cita entre las víctimas de abusos perpetrados en 2010 a defensores de derechos humanos y periodistas, que han sido objeto de hostigamiento, homicidio y acciones judiciales arbitrarias.

En el caso de los activistas de derechos humanos, el estudio destacó que sufrieron acoso en países como Brasil, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, México y Venezuela "porque su labor amenazaba los intereses económicos y políticos de quienes ocupaban el poder".

En Colombia y Brasil se crearon mecanismos de protección de los defensores de los derechos humanos, pero en otros se hicieron pocos avances, como en México, donde no se ha aplicado un programa de resguardo creado en 2008, según AI.

La organización manifestó su preocupación por la situación de Venezuela, donde activistas de derechos humanos y críticos del gobierno sufrieron ataques y actos de intimidación.

En el caso de la prensa, casi 400 trabajadores de los medios de comunicación fueron blanco de amenazas o ataques y al menos 13 murieron a manos de agresores no identificados, siendo México el país más peligroso para los periodistas, seguido de Honduras, Colombia y Brasil.

Según AI, los indígenas son uno de los sectores que han logrado organizarse en defensa de sus derechos, aunque persiste el legado histórico de abusos contra las comunidades autóctonas en toda la región.

El documento advierte que la expansión de la frontera agrícola y los grandes proyectos de desarrollo como carreteras, minas y represas hidroeléctricas amenazaron a comunidades indígenas de América Latina.

"En Argentina, Brasil, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, Panamá, Paraguay y Perú, los indígenas considerados un obstáculo para los intereses comerciales fueron objeto de amenazas, acoso, desalojos forzosos, desplazamientos y homicidios a medida que el afán de explotación de los recursos se intensificaba en las zonas que habitan", señaló el estudio.

Asimismo, pobladores de barriadas pobres en México, Centroamérica y Brasil se vieron atrapados entre la proliferación de bandas criminales organizadas y las fuerzas de seguridad que cometen abusos en su lucha contra la delincuencia.

"En muchos casos la corrupción endémica de las instituciones del Estado redujo la capacidad de éstas de responder adecuadamente a la delincuencia organizada", alertó AI. "Los gobiernos se mostraron reacios a abordar este problema sistémico y prolongado y recurrieron de forma creciente al ejército para responder a la delincuencia".

Amnistía Internacional elogió los esfuerzos de naciones como Argentina, Uruguay, Perú y Colombia por procesar a militares y agentes de seguridad responsables de atropellos.

No obstante, advirtió que "en muchos casos los avances se vieron seriamente obstaculizados por la falta de colaboración de las instituciones militares.

Tal fue el caso de Bolivia, donde responsables de investigar desapariciones forzadas cometidas entre 1980 y 1981 tuvieron dificultades para acceder a los archivos militares, mientras que en Colombia y México, la justicia militar reclamó jurisdicción sobre los casos de violación de derechos humanos, impidiendo su procesamiento en tribunales civiles.

Igualmente, en Chile la Corte Suprema ratificó la decisión de aplicar la ley de amnistía de 1978 en el caso de la desaparición del diplomático español Carmelo Soria, asesinado en 1976 por fuerzas de seguridad, mientras que la justicia de Brasil determinó que delitos atribuidos a las fuerzas armadas están amparados por una ley de amnistía de 1979.

En este último caso, la Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos decidió este año que la ley de amnistía era nula y recordó a las autoridades brasileñas "su obligación de llevar a la justicia a los perpetradores" de abusos cometidos por las fuerzas armadas durante la dictadura de 1964 a 1985.

Entre tanto, en Perú el Congreso revocó un decreto que daba amnistía a violadores de los derechos humanos pero mantuvo otros dos decretos que permitían enjuiciar a responsables de derechos humanos en tribunales militares, no civiles.

Amnistía Internacional también lamentó que en El Salvador el presidente Mauricio Funes instauró una comisión para buscar niños desaparecidos durante el conflicto armado de 1980 a 1992, pero al concluir 2010, el grupo no estaba en funcionamiento y se desconocía el paradero de cientos de menores.

Poll: Michigan voters split on Obama job rating

By KATHY BARKS HOFFMAN, Associated Press

LANSING, May 17, 2011 (AP): A poll finds that President Barack Obama's favorability rating rose among Michigan voters after Osama bin Laden's death.

The poll, however, finds that most state voters are unhappy with how he's handling the economy.

The EPIC-MRA poll released Tuesday showed 53 percent of 600 likely voters polled May 9-11 had a favorable opinion of the Democratic president, up 9 points since February. Forty percent had an unfavorable opinion and 7 percent were undecided.

A third gave him a positive job rating on handling the economy, while 66 percent gave him a negative rating and 2 percent were undecided.

Half gave Obama a positive job rating for conducting foreign affairs and waging the war in Afghanistan.

The poll had a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 4 percentage points.

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Headquarters: Adams Street, downtown Toledo, Ohio

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• Tierra phone 313.729.4435 • Fax: Please e-mail.

DEADLINE: MONDAY AT 5:00PM, Prior to Distribution

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• **Web site: www.laprensa1.com** •

Limit: five free copies per reader. Additional copies are \$1.00 each.

Hardcopy subscriptions \$100 per year. Emailed link to pdf is gratis.

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Conjunto Crossroads: Jimmy Bejarano Sr. inducted into Texas Conjunto Hall of Fame

(Continued from Page LP1)

alongside his father for more than 35 years. Rubén just marked 25 years with the band.

"We know what to do, we don't get mad at each other," the older Bejarano said of playing music all those years with his two sons. Jimmy Sr. and his wife also have a 46-year old daughter Sonia. "We just do our thing. We never get into any fights. It's real nice."

"I've worked with some other pioneer musicians and I've had opportunities to leave," said Jimmy Jr., who chose to keep the family band intact all of these years. "I made a promise that as long as my dad wanted to work with me, I would work with him."

11 releases since 1994

But *Los Cuatro Vientos* only began recording its music in 1994, piling up eleven CD's since then. Jimmy Jr. explained the group's first recordings came out on cassette, as they tried to put out one every year. Their aim was to make their recordings sound just like the group does live in concert.

"We just get together and jam," said Jimmy Sr. "I loved to play. We just play stuff we like. Our boys don't drink, are not into drugs. They love music. So that's what we do. We play music."

The 71-year old accordion player now plans to travel extensively with his wife. They even have a recreational vehicle dubbed "*The Four Winds*" after the band. The RV will become his "house on wheels."

"We sure like to travel," said Jimmy Sr. with a chuckle. "Just stop and go, not so far—because you know how gas is. It's nine miles per gallon and that's not very much."

The elder Bejarano also plans to teach his grandson Alejandro, age 4, to play the accordion.

"He loves to play, that boy," said Jimmy Sr. with a big laugh. "I bought him a little guitar. Toes tapping, moving all over the place. He loves to play."

Jimmy Jr. also explained that his father has had back problems for several years and needed to slow down. He and Rubén would load and unload the instruments so he could rest, but the younger Bejarano stated his father struggled to stand on stage for a couple of hours at a time and it began to take a physical toll.

"It wasn't an easy decision," Jimmy Jr. said of his dad's retirement from music. "He's an amazing accordion player, even today. He still has quite a range."

Jimmy, Jr., 49, stated he planned to retire early from UPS in Toledo, move to Texas, and seek to join another conjunto musical group or form his own. Most of that genre of Latino-influenced music still is based in the San Antonio region. The bold move makes his father proud.

"It's pretty important to me and the boys to keep it alive," said the elder Bejarano. "There's not very many bands over here. It's important to keep it up." Rubén, 44, plans to stay in Fremont.

Bejarano was born on July 25, 1939 in Brownsville, Texas. When Jimmy Sr. was ten years old, his father Joaquin bought him his first accordion from a pawn shop in Lima, Ohio for \$25. Little Jimmy quickly taught himself his first polka.

According to his hall of fame biography, Bejarano joined *El Conjunto de Eddie Cruz*, playing guitar in 1953 and formed *El Conjunto de Jimmy Bejarano* a year later. In 1976, the original version of *Los Cuatro Vientos* was formed; a father-son/father-son team, with Jimmy Sr. on accordion, Jimmy Jr. on bass guitar, *Roque Cuevas* on bajo sexto, and *Leonel Cuevas* on drums. In 1986, Jimmy Jr. switched to bajo sexto and Rubén first joined the band on bass. Since then, Rubén has since switched to drums. The current lineup of *Los Cuatro Vientos*, formed in 2000, added *Angel Torres* on bass guitar.

In 2004, Jimmy Sr. received a certificate of recognition from the Lucas County Board of Commissioners, presented by Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur for 50 years of contributing music and culture to the Latino community.

"Music is a big part of our family heritage and tradition," Jimmy Jr. explained. "It was such a big part of being a migrant worker, even when we first came to Ohio."

Jimmy Jr. explained that his father and grandfather first started playing conjunto music while the family worked the fields as migrant farm workers. The family traveled as far as Nebraska and Montana before settling in the Fremont area near a Heinz factory, where tomato and pickle fields were plentiful.

Evenings were frequently spent in Jimmy Sr.'s youth playing music as families gathered to cook dinner together. Conjunto bands would travel the migrant camp circuit on weekends, playing at dances across the region.

"After a long day of work, that's how they would relax," said Jimmy Jr. "It would relieve a lot of stress."

Jimmy Sr. and his father continued to play conjunto music even after finally obtaining jobs at a nearby steel mill in 1959.

"It was more like a hobby for him at that point, because of his factory work," said Jimmy Jr.

Other Tejano Conjunto Hall of Fame inductees

Five other conjunto music legends joined Bejarano as hall of fame inductees, including: *Román Martínez* from The Hometown Boys, *George y Magüe Orosco* del Duetto Carta Blanca, *Santiago Jiménez Jr.* (Flaco's brother), *Richard "Güero Polkas" Dávila* from KEDA Radio, and *Bene Layton* from Los Layton, who passed away this year.

The festival itself featured 25 concerts from some big names, including hall of famers *Mingo Saldivar*, *Eva Ybarra*, *Oscar Hernández*, and *Los Dos Gilbertos*, as well as music clinics and other events at San Antonio's Guadalupe Theater and Rosedale Park. Other events included a Seniors Conjunto Dance, workshops for the button accordion and bajo sexto, a CD Release Party for the "Best of the 29th Annual Tejano Conjunto Festival" (recorded live at the 2010 festival, and a student recital.

"We appreciate all of our fans, because air time is hard to come by in the Midwest," said Jimmy Jr. "Almost all of the air time we have had comes in Texas. But playing our music has made us all very happy." *Celso Rodríguez contributed to this report. Photos by Celso Rodríguez.*

Carlos Santana crítica a Georgia y Arizona por leyes migratorias

ATLANTA, 15 de mayo de 2011 (AP): Carlos Santana usó el domingo el partido anual de béisbol por los derechos civiles como plataforma para criticar a los estados de Georgia y Arizona por sus nuevas leyes migratorias.

El músico mexicano recibió el premio Beacon of Change (Guía del cambio) que otorga Grandes Ligas antes del partido entre Bravos y Filis en Atlanta, la principal ciudad de Georgia.

El ganador del Grammy dijo que estaba representando a los inmigrantes y agregó que "las personas de Arizona, Atlanta y Georgia, deberían estar avergonzadas de sí mismas".

El gobernador de Georgia, Nathan Deal, firmó el viernes una iniciativa contra la inmigración ilegal en el estado. La iniciativa obliga a muchos empleadores a revisar el estatus migratorio de las nuevas contrataciones y permite a las autoridades verificar los documentos migratorios de algunos sospechosos.

La nueva ley de Georgia comparte algunas similitudes con la promulgada el año pasado en Arizona.

"Esta ley no es correcta. De hecho, es cruel", dijo Santana en una improvisada conferencia de prensa después de la ceremonia.

"Esto es sobre el temor. Déjense de cuentos", agregó. "La gente teme que le vayamos a robar su empleo. No lo haremos. Ustedes no van a cambiar sábanas y limpiar retretes".

"Esto es Estados Unidos. Es la tierra de la libertad", siguió el músico. "Si la gente quiere que se sigan aprobando leyes migratorias, entonces todos deberían irse y dejar aquí a los indios americanos."

El reverendo Jesse Jackson fue el encargado de entregar un premio similar a Ernie Banks, de los Cachorros de Chicago e integrante del salón de la fama del béisbol

• Santana scolds Georgia, AZ for new immigration law

By CHARLES ODUM, AP Sports Writer

ATLANTA, May 16, 2011 (AP): Carlos Santana on Sunday used baseball's annual *Civil Rights Game* as a platform to admonish Georgia and Arizona for their new immigration laws. Santana received the Beacon of Change Award before the Braves-Phillies game.

The Grammy-winning musician said he was representing immigrants before adding: "The people of Arizona, and the people of Atlanta, Georgia, you should be ashamed of yourselves."

Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal on Friday signed a bill that cracks down on undocumented immigration in the state. The bill requires many employers to check the immigration status of new hires and authorizes law enforcement officers to check the immigration status of some suspects.



Carlos Santana

Georgia's new law shares some similarities to one enacted last year in Arizona.

"This law is not correct. It's a cruel law, actually," Santana said in an impromptu news conference after the ceremony. "This is about fear. Stop shucking and jiving. People are afraid we're going to steal your job. No we aren't. You're not going to change sheets and clean toilets."

Added Santana: "This is the United States. This is the land of the free. If people want the immigration laws to keep passing, then everybody should get out and leave the American Indians here."

Rev. Jesse Jackson presented the *Beacon of Life Award* to Cubs Hall of Famer Ernie Banks. "I haven't done anything to earn it, but I appreciate it," Banks said.

Former Dodgers pitcher Don Newcombe presented the Beacon of Hope Award to actor Morgan Freeman, who wore a Braves jacket and a Negro Leagues Atlanta Black Crackers cap.

Al Roker, co-host of NBC's *The Today Show*, was the moderator for the ceremony and introduced a video tribute to Braves Hall of Famer Hank Aaron, who received a standing ovation from his hometown fans.

The Braves and Phillies wore throwback uniforms from the 1974 season, the year Aaron broke Babe Ruth's career home run record.

Two leaders of the civil rights movement in Atlanta, former Mayor Andrew Young and the Rev. Joseph Lowery, went to the mound for the ceremonial first pitches, thrown to two African-American stars—Phillies slugger Ryan Howard and Atlanta's Jason Heyward.

Baseball commissioner Bud Selig attended the ceremony. This is baseball's fifth Civil Rights Game. The first event was in Memphis in 2007.

"Anytime you can honor the people that changed the game, it's a good thing," said Phillies general manager *Rubén Amaro*. The game also will return to Atlanta in 2012. "I think it's the perfect city to host this," Braves manager *Fredi González* said.

Tony & Janina's American Wedding: A Deportation Love Story

Tony & Janina's American Wedding: A Deportation Love Story is a feature length documentary that gets to the heart of the broken, red-tape-ridden U.S. immigration system. After 18 years in the United States, Tony and Janina Wasilewski's family was torn apart when Janina was deported back to Poland, taking their 6 year old son Brian, a US Citizen, with her.

Set on the backdrop of the Chicago political scene, and featuring Illinois Congressman *Luis Gutiérrez* at the heart of the immigration reform movement, this film follows the Wasilewski's 3-year struggle to be reunited, as their Senator Barack Obama rises to the Presidency.

With a fresh perspective on the immigration conversation, this film tells the untold human rights story of Post-9/11 America that every undocumented immigrant in America faces today.

The film's director, *Ruth Leithman*, will travel with the film, hosting discussions at community centers, churches, museums, and movie theaters across the state.

The tour began with a screening in Bay City and continues through the state of Michigan with a finale in Metro Detroit.

Remaining Screening Dates and Locations:

Friday, May 20: Hamtramck, Time: 7:00pm, at Hamtramck Public Library, 2360 Caniff Street Hamtramck, (313) 365-7050.

Saturday May 21: Troy, Time: 12:00pm, American Polish Cultural Center, 2975 E. Maple Road, Troy.

Saturday May 21: Southwest Detroit, Special Deportation Love Story Fundraiser Reception: Tickets \$25, Time: 3:30 pm, Café con Leche Coffeehouse, 4200 W. Vernor Highway, Detroit.

Saturday, May 21: Dearborn, Time 6:30pm, Arab-American National Museum, 13624 Michigan Avenue, Dearborn.



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La Prensa has been publishing since 1989 and prints **12,500** issues of its weekly, bilingual issue as can be verified by calling our printer Michigan Web Press of Davisburg MI at 1.248.620.2990. In addition, Mid-month, *La Prensa* is part of the monthly publication **Lazo Cultural**, which prints **10,000**. *La Prensa* has a **94%** pick up rate with a readership multiple of 3.6, yielding in a **total** weekly readership figure of **63,680**, including **14,000** weekly visits at www.laprensa1.com.



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