

Ethnic Dance Music in Northern Indiana

Los Cazadores

IH201 Marion - October 11, 1986. Nortena conjunto.

Los Cazadores

Miguel Contreras (accordion-vocals), Ricardo Contreras (drums-vocals), Ricardo Bosquez (bajo sexto) & Julian Rodrigues (eb)

Los Gorionceros

Chano Luna (accordion-vocals), Fernando Luna (bajo sexto-vocals), Roma Luna (drums) & R----
- Gonazales (bass)

Public dance at Sunset Reception Hall in Fort Wayne; recorded by Paul L. Tyler

About two hundred people from the Mexican communities of Fort Wayne, Decatur, and Bluffton attended this public dance featuring Texas-style or Norteña music. Los Cazadores (The Hunters), from Marion, Indiana, were the featured band. A local band, Los Gorioncios (a kind of bird) did a guest set using the first bands instruments and equipment. Armando Davila, partner of Clem Trevino, owner of the hall, calls Los Cazadores the "number one band in Indiana."

Public dances are scheduled at the hall three or four times a month. Clem and Armando pick the best dates for themselves. Weddings and quincineras fill up the other weekend dates. They hire bands from the Tri-State area: To Defiance, Ohio; Lansing, Michigan; and Marion, Indiana. They don't often use local bands since out of town bands usually draw better. Likewise, local bands draw better at out-of-town jobs.

The Sunset's dance floor measures about thirty feet by sixty feet. A twelve foot by twelve foot stage, raised eighteen inches off the floor, stands at one end of the hall. Four tables were set against the wall along one side of the dance floor. Eight tables, set diagonally in two rows, lined the other side of the dance floor. Beyond these, toward the back, was the bar where the men congregated. At the other end of the hall, twenty tables were set in four rows perpendicular to the dance floor. Of the two hundred people present, a hundred were dancing at any one time.

Both bands played requests, usually alternating several rancheros or polkas with cumbias and an occasional bolero. Rancheros and polkas are duple meter tunes played at the same tempo; the former have lyrics and the latter are instrumentals. Cumbias are slightly faster, and were described to me as "where you dance loose." Boleros are slow dances in duple meter. The band also played one slow waltz and one huapanga a very fast tune in triple meter.

According to Mike Contreras, leader of Los Cazadores, the band is usually booked two nights a week, travelling as far away as Detroit, St. Paul, and Newport News, but not to the Chicago area. They play for a lot of weddings and quincineras, which are different from playing for a public dance in that at the latter they must play special songs for the sponsors. Their favorite halls are the Sunset, a hall in Toledo, and one in Elmwood, Indiana. They would like to make music a full-time occupation. It's possible, because they can make as much money in two nights up north as a band in Texas makes in five.