

career. Like some artists on the "Jook Joint" side of the Muskadine LP, Taylor is a blend of urban and rural styles. His use of lyrics is sparse, but when he does sing, his blues fit traditional linguistic patterns. The song "Sitting at Home Alone" was improvised in the recording studio, according to the record notes, and clearly shows Taylor's country blues roots.

However his electric guitar is played in a style quite different from the 1940's playing of Broonzy of Memphis Minnie. Although he uses a slide, the sound produced is not at all like acoustic slide guitar. Taylor utilizes the special qualities of the electric guitar to produce a never more "modern" blues sound.

The record notes are very interesting. A brief history of the career of Taylor and the recent success of the HouseRockers is given, pointing out that, until recently, these musicians were only semi-professionals. A one-line comment for each selection classifies the pieces as "uptempo shuffle," "slow slide blues" etc., and notes the influence of Elmore James, Jimmy Reed, Phil Upchurch, and Chuck Berry on the group. But of more interest yet is a list of schools, festivals, clubs, and concerts at which Taylor and the HouseRockers have appeared, complete with places and dates.

Each of these LP's brings our understanding of the inter-relationship of rural blues with urban blues a little closer.

Texas-Mexican Border Music; Una Historia de la Musica de la Frontera
Vol. 1 Folklyric 9003, \$5.98. Folklyric Records, Box 9195, Berkeley, Calif. 94709. Edited and produced by Chris Strachwitz. Booklet edited and written by Chris Strachwitz. Narciso Martinez, Pedro Rocha y Lupe Martinez, El Ciego Melquiades, Lidya Mendoza, Orquesta Pajaro Azul, Banda Tipica Mazatlan, Trio San Antonio, Los Donnenos, Los Nortenos con Mariachi, Alegres de Teran, Hermanos Prado, Los Tremendos Gavilanes, Los Nortenos de Nuevo Laredo.

Reviewed by Philip Brandt George.

Until the appearance of Folklyric Records, which has produced "Down Home Music Since 1960," little attention has been paid, on records, to the history and development of the regional music of the Texas-Mexican border area. With the exception of this record, and others in this series, there are virtually no easily available recordings of this music from prior to the late 1940's. Usually considered to be the last type of Mexican regional music to evolve, Mexican and Anglo producers have virtually ignored it in recent years in its historical perspective, with the possible exception of the corrido (ballad).

This regional music is one more proof of the fact that the Mexican-U.S. border is purely political since the music has been extremely popular in both Northern Mexico and the American Southwest since it first began to develop around the turn of the century.

This selection represents the full spectrum of popular Texas-Mexican music in terms of types of song and performance with the exception of the latest rock type of groups like that of Little Joe and the Latinaires which have a highly electrified sound and play everything from corridos to "soul." Included here are corridos, rancheras (the equivalent of Anglo Country and Western), canciones (songs), a vals (waltz), and a polka. Five of the 13 are from the 1930's, 2 from the 40's, 3 from the 50's, and 3 from the 60's.

Three of the cuts are instrumentalizations. Performance styles range from a solofiddle backed by guitar and string bass (El Ciego Melquiades) and a solo voice with twelve string guitar (Lidia Mendoza) to the band and orchestra sound of the Banda Tipica Mazatlan and La Orquesta Pajaro Azul, the latter producing a sound reminiscent of the swing bands of the 30's and 40's. In between these extremes one hears duet singing with guitar and accordion (Los Alegres de Teran and Los Tremendos Gavilanes), and a tight conjunto displaying the close coordination between saxophone and accordion of the type which became very popular in the 60's (Los Nortenos de Nuevo Laredo).

The 15-page booklet which is issued with the record is excellent even if weirdly written at times. For example: "however, even in 1973, when the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City issued a 12-LP anthology of Mexican regional folk music traditions, they did not see fit to include even one volume devoted to norteno music--no, not even one single tune!" (p.3). Later the editor states, "Both in song content and emotional involvement Norteno music can be compared with American Country and Western music. It is often called ranchera music--meaning cowboy music, and rancheras can most easily be translated as cowboy songs." (p. 10). The booklet begins with a good general statement on the history and nature of norteno music and a map of the Texas-Mexican border is presented. These are followed with complete transcriptions of the Spanish texts with a side by side English translation. The translations are excellent except for one glaring error. In the text of "A Lunadas," "cristales de papel" should be translated as "crystals of paper" not as "paper of crystal" as it appears.

The texts are followed by a section on the artists which identifies them and tries to describe their position in the tradition. While the information is good, it is incomplete and unequal. Several paragraphs are presented on Narciso Martinez and the duet

of Pedro Rocha and Lupe Martinez but only a minimum of information is given for the rest.

The owner of this album is then given a bonus. Strachwitz presents a selected discography of the "more-or-less available LP's of Texas-Mexican Border music (1950's to 1970)." This is then followed by the names and addresses of the 16 producers of those LP's. Page 14 contains an outline of the history of the border from 1748 to 1970 which is interesting but completely unrelated to the rest of the production.

Although this writer is not familiar with the other Folklyric records in this series (9004/Early Corridos I; 9005/Early Corridos II; and 9006/Norteno Accordion I, The 1930's), I am familiar with other productions of this music by Folklyric under the Arhoolie label (Arhoolie 3002/Los Pinguinos del Norte, for example), and they are excellent. Finally someone is making the full range of Texas-Mexican border music available to its aficionados. Perhaps now this music will become known as the great regional form that it is and its possible cross-fertilizations with Anglo County and Western music can be studied.

GLEN NEAVES AND THE VIRGINIA MOUNTAIN BOYS. Folkways FA3830. 33 1/3 rpm, monophonic. Produced by Eric H. Davidson and others. Folkways Records and Service Corporation, 701 Seventh Avenue, New York, New York, 10036. \$6.98.

Reviewed by Miles Grassen.

This is the sixth Folkways issue of field recording made by Eric Davidson and associates in the Grayson and Carroll Counties area of southwestern Virginia. Unlike most of the previous issues where examples of older traditional styles were featured, the present recording is entirely devoted to the music of a local bluegrass band. The Glen Neaves band which has already been included in several of the earlier Davidson productions to contrast more recent developments in mountain music with the older forms is now given the opportunity to display a wider range of its repertory. The sixteen selections include two instrumentals, one religious song, three ballads, and nine standard mountain songs all performed in typical bluegrass format with lead and harmonized vocals accompanied by fiddle, banjo, mandolin, and guitar. While almost all of the selections have often been recorded in similar versions by slicker, more commercial bluegrass bands, the performances here are characterized by a sincerity that one would expect from locally oriented, semi-professional musicians. The one unusual selection, "Nigger Trader," is a white mountaineer's attempt to evoke the feelings of a black man sold into slavery. This song is sung by Neaves with only guitar accompaniment.