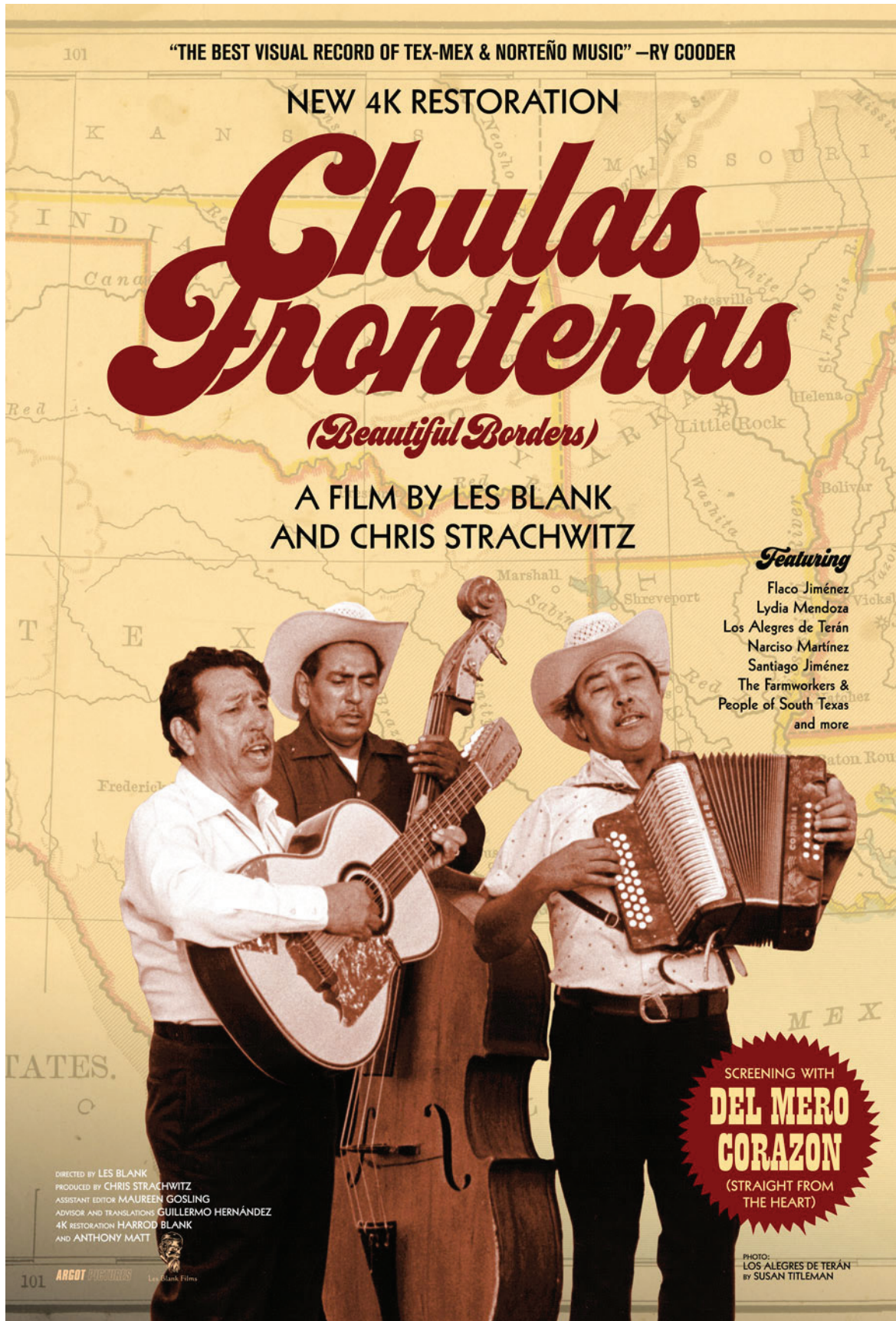


Brazos Films, Les Blank Films & Argot Pictures present
New 4K restorations of **CHULAS FRONTERAS (1976)**
and **DEL MERO CORAZÓN (1979)**



"THE BEST VISUAL RECORD OF TEX-MEX & NORTEÑO MUSIC" —RY COODER

NEW 4K RESTORATION

Chulas Fronteras

(Beautiful Borders)

A FILM BY LES BLANK
AND CHRIS STRACHWITZ

Featuring

Flaco Jiménez
Lydia Mendoza
Los Alegres de Terán
Narciso Martínez
Santiago Jiménez
The Farmworkers &
People of South Texas
and more

SCREENING WITH
**DEL MERO
CORAZON**
(STRAIGHT FROM
THE HEART)

DIRECTED BY LES BLANK
PRODUCED BY CHRIS STRACHWITZ
ASSISTANT EDITOR MAUREEN GOSLING
ADVISOR AND TRANSLATIONS GUILLERMO HERNÁNDEZ
4K RESTORATION HARROD BLANK
AND ANTHONY MATT

101

ARGOT PICTURES

Les Blank Films

PHOTO:
LOS ALEGRES DE TERÁN
BY SUSAN TITLEMAN

Chulas Fronteras

(Beautiful Borders)

1976, 58 min.

Directed by Les Blank & Chris Strachwitz

Chulas Fronteras is a zesty introduction to musica Norteña (Tejano/Conjunto) and the culture that exists along the Texas-Mexican border. The music is a fusion of traditional Mexican harmonies, central European dancehall rhythms and a little something extra. From soulful, lively dance tunes to political work songs, música Norteña has evolved since the turn of the 20th century into a unique Mexican-American hybrid. Blank links the music's spirit and vitality to the strong family bonds of Tejanos. The plight of migrant workers adds a sobering backbeat to this joyous film.

FEATURING: Flaco Jiménez, Lydia Mendoza, Los Alegres de Terán, Narciso Martínez, Santiago Jiménez, Rumel Fuentes, Don Santiago Jiménez, Los Pingüinos del Norte, Ramiro Cavazos.

"A Tex-Mex masterpiece."

—Michael Goodwin, THE VILLAGE VOICE

"His work remains some of the richest, most palpable sensory experiences ever committed to celluloid."

—KEITH WATSON, SLANT MAGAZINE

"Reminds one of a time when it was possible to think of the Mexican border without wanting to punch many of your fellow Americans in the face."

—John DeFore, THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

SHOWING WITH

Del Mero Corazón

(Straight From the Heart)

1979, 28 min.

Directed by Maureen Gosling, Les Blank,
Guillermo Hernández & Chris Strachwitz

A lyrical journey through the heart of Chicano culture as reflected in the love songs of the Tex-Mex Norteña music tradition, constructed from outtakes from *Chulas Fronteras* and brought to life by long time collaborator of Les Blank's, Maureen Gosling.

FEATURING: Little Joe & La Familia, Leo Garza & His Conjunto, Chavela & Brown Express, Andrés Berlanga, Ricardo Mejía, Conjunto Tamaulipas.

ABOUT **CHULAS FRONTERAS**

“When Arhoolie Records pioneer Chris Strachwitz and filmmaker Les Blank teamed up in the mid-’70s to document traditional conjunto music, there was no fanfare. Few knew the music outside the Spanish-speaking lower Rio Grande Valley, the cradle of the music’s existence. Nevertheless, the two blazed ahead, driven by the conviction that traditional conjunto is as vital as other U.S. ‘vernacular’ music like the blues, jazz, and zydeco. Their work became two landmark films: *Chulas Fronteras* and *Del Mero Corazón*. The Library of Congress eventually selected *Chulas Fronteras* for the National Film Registry of motion pictures to be preserved in perpetuity, and both films have gone on to inspire future generations of musicians and filmmakers. The traditional three-piece conjunto — guitar, bajo sexto, and accordion — is the centerpiece of *Chulas Fronteras*. With deep respect, the film captures the spirit of the border cantinas, the ranchos, and backyard barbecues where the music is most alive. The goofy, ’70s-style clothing has come and gone, but the music remains resilient... A heartfelt tribute to the profoundly important Tejano contribution to American roots music.”

— Belinda Acosta, *Austin Chronicle*, 2003

ABOUT **DEL MERO CORAZÓN**

“Chris Strachwitz said he wanted to give life to some of the great songs in the ‘outtakes’ from *Chulas Fronteras*. Les had edited some of the scenes, but they weren’t included in *Chulas* because they didn’t ‘fit.’ When I looked at the outtake songs and edited pieces, I noticed that there were mostly love songs. I told Chris that I would be glad to create something out of them and asked him to give me the go ahead. I wondered if there were cultural/historical antecedents to the poetry of the songs, because the poetry is what blew me away when I started working on *Chulas Fronteras* as an assistant. UCLA Mexican-American Studies professor Guillermo Hernández, translator and advisor, confirmed it and thought it was a great idea. So he found the poetry, some of it Aztec, which adds another layer to the film. We chose a woman’s voice to read the poetry, to balance out all the maleness among the musicians. Guillermo and I worked closely, as well as getting creative input from Chris and Les.”

—Maureen Gosling

The Musicians

Leonardo "Flaco" Jiménez



We meet three generations of the Jiménez family, who all play the accordion, little David, Flaco and his father Santiago. Their music is steeped in the traditions of South Texas accordionists who have evolved their style from German, Italian, Bohemian, and other European settlers in the area. Flaco Jimenez' career has spanned six decades and includes 5 Grammy awards. He has played and recorded with Bob Dylan, The Rolling Stones, Ry Cooder, Dough Sahm, Los Lobos, Dr. John, Sir Douglas Quintet, Linda Ronstadt, Emmylou Harris and many more.

Santiago Jiménez



Santiago is Flaco's father, seen in the film accompanied by another son, Jimmy (Santiago, Jr.), playing the bajo sexto, who is also a fine accordionist in his father's style. Santiago Jiménez was also known as "El Flaco" on his first records issued in the 1930s and has continued to be a popular and influential accordionist in the San Antonio area through the 1960s, when he retired from playing dances for a living.

Los Alegres de Terán



This duo, Eugenio Abrego (accordion) and Tomás Ortíz (bajo sexto), were originally from General Terán, Nuevo Laredo, Mexico. They not only initiated the Norteño style by blending their voices with the fine accordion work of Mr. Abrego, but also popularized the music all over Mexico, Central and South America, and in every part of the United States where Mexican-Americans reside. They are seen at a typical dance in Corpus Christi, at home and a barbecue at a friend's ranch near Reynosa. They made the classic son, "Volver, Volver", known all over the Americas.

Lydia Mendoza



One of the few women singers to make a name for herself in South Texas and Mexico, Lydia's records, beginning in the 1930s, have sold widely to Spanish-speaking people from all walks of life. The film represents her as she sang in the '30s (via old photos and old records) and as she performs today at a club in Galveston, Texas, and preparing the hogs-head tamales for her family on Christmas Eve at her home in Houston. She was known as "La Alondra de la Fronterra" (The Lark of the Border). In 2013 the US Postal Service issued a stamp in her honor, as part of their Music Icons series.

Narcisco Martínez



Billed since his first recordings in the mid-1930s as "El Huracán Del Valle" (The Hurricane of the Valley), Narcisco Martínez was the first influential accordionist to develop what is today the Norteño style of playing the accordion. By emphasizing high notes and leaving the bass parts to his bajo sexto player, Narcisco opened the way for modern accordionists like Ramon Ayala and Ruben Vela. He's seen in the film performing at a cantina in his home town of La Paloma, Texas, at work as a caretaker in the Brownsville Zoo, and playing for a 50th wedding anniversary.



Rumel Fuentes & Los Pingüinos del Norte

An amateur song-writer and musician, Rumel was the composer of the moving tribute to Cesar Chávez heard in the film and of the powerful closing song, "Mexico Americano" (both sung by Los Pingüinos del Norte). Rumel himself is seen singing a remarkable impromptu version of Doug Sahm's "Chicano" filmed at the end of our day of celebrating at the Fuentes home in Eagle Pass, Texas.



The Filmmakers

Les Blank

Director, Chulas Fronteras/ Co-Filmmaker, Del Mero Corazón.

Les Blank (1935-2013) was an internationally renowned, independent filmmaker, whose poetic work offers intimate, idiosyncratic glimpses into the lives, culture and music of the passionate people at the periphery of American society. His film topics have included Cajun, Mexican, Polish, Hawaiian, and Serbian-American music and food traditions, Afro-Cuban drummers, Texas blues men, Appalachian fiddlers, "flower children", gap-toothed women, and the garlic plant.

Blank is perhaps best known for his feature-length *Burden of Dreams* (1982), with co-filmmaker Maureen Gosling, documenting the chaotic production of fellow director, and friend, Werner Herzog's 1982 film *Fitzcarraldo* in the jungles of the Peruvian Amazon. Honored with a Criterion DVD edition, and a British Academy Award, Roger Ebert called *Burden of Dreams*, "...one of the most remarkable documentaries ever made about the making of a movie."

Another of Blank's best-loved works is *Garlic Is As Good As Ten Mothers* (1980), a seminal food film featuring culinary pioneer Alice Waters, and the Gilroy Garlic Festival. This film, notorious for its mouth-wateringness, was initially shown in "Aromaround" with garlic simultaneously roasted in-theater.

Chris Strachwitz

Producer, Chulas Fronteras /Co-filmmaker/Producer, Del Mero Corazón

Chris Strachwitz came to the United States as a refugee from Germany after World War II. Writes folklorist Dr. James Griffith: "Growing up in California, he was fascinated by the rich mix of traditional music that he was able to hear on the radio: old-time country music from the valley and from the border stations, blues, [gospel, jazz,] and Mexican music of various kinds. [In 1960], he met Mance Lipscomb, the great Texas songster and guitar picker, and produced an LP record of him. This was the beginning of Arhoolie Records. . . . Over the years, Chris has sought out and recorded a truly huge number of traditional musicians and singers, mostly from the United States, and issued their work on his Arhoolie label. Some, like Clifton Chenier, Lydia Mendoza, and Marc Savoy, were widely known within their own cultural communities. He brought these artists to a wider audience and helped their careers move a step further. Strachwitz has also amassed the largest collection of Texas-Mexican border recordings (78s & 45s), in his Frontera Collection - housed at the UCLA Chicano Studies Department and now digitally available on YouTube.

Maureen Gosling

**Assistant Editor on Chulas Fronteras / Director on Del Mero Corazón /
Co-Supervisor on Restoration**

Maureen Gosling has been a documentary filmmaker for more than forty years, who has worked variously as a director, producer, editor, sound recordist and distributor on several dozen full-length films, shorts and music videos. Gosling was Producer/Director and Editor with Chris Simon on the feature, *This Ain't No Mouse Music!* (SXSW), on Chris Strachwitz and his Arhoolie Records. Since being inspired by Latino culture while working on *Chulas Fronteras*, she has been involved with almost two dozen Spanish-language related films and videos. Most notably, Gosling directed, produced and edited *Blossoms of Fire*, a feature-length tribute to the Isthmus Zapotecs of southern Oaxaca, Mexico (Coral Award: Havana International FF). She has also edited dozens of social and cultural documentary films, including *Smokin' Fish*, by Luke Griswold-Tergis and Cory Mann (Broadcast nationwide on PBS+); *The Long Shadow* by Frances Causey (4th Best Selling Doc on iTunes); and *A Dangerous Idea* by Stephanie Welch. Gosling is best known for her 20-year collaboration with the late Les Blank on over twenty films, as co-filmmaker, editor, sound recordist, most notably *Burden of Dreams* (British Academy Award for Best Documentary 1982).

Harrod Blank

Digital Intermediate Executive Producer.

Harrod Blank is an artist and filmmaker, internationally known for creating and documenting Art Cars. He learned filmmaking as a youth, by working for his father Les Blank. Currently he is the president of Les Blank Films, a non-profit, which aims to preserve and distribute the films of Les Blank and others. He has produced the 4K digital masters of *Chulas Fronteras* and *Del Mero Corazón*, *A Poem Is A Naked Person*, (starring Leon Russell), *Dizzy*, a film on Dizzy Gillespie.

Harrod is building a museum in Douglas, AZ (Art Car World), creating a film series about Burning Man, and currently releasing his latest film about gender identity, "Why Can't I Be Me? Around You?"

Credits

CHULAS FRONTERAS

A film by Les Blank & Chris Strachwitz
Cinematography & Editing by Les Blank
Conceived, Produced & Sound Recording by Chris Strachwitz
Assistant Editing by Maureen Gosling
Consultant & Translations by Guillermo Hernández
Interpreting on Location by Bruce "Pacho" Lane

DEL MERO CORAZÓN

A film by Maureen Gosling, Les Blank, Guillermo Hernández & Chris Strachwitz
Directed & Edited by Maureen Gosling
Photography & Special Editing by Les Blank
Produced & Sound Recording by Chris Strachwitz
Consultant Editor & Poetry Selected by Guillermo Hernández
Poetry (from songs & literature) read by María Antonia Contreras
Transcriptions & Translations by Yolanda Zepeda, Guillermo Hernández & Maureen Gosling
"Little Joe" segment filmed by Ricardo Soto & Chris Beaver

New Digital 4k Masters produced by

Brazos Films, Chris Strachwitz & Les Blank Films
Digital Intermediate Executive Producer: Harrod Blank
Post Production Supervisor & Digital Intermediate Editor: Anthony Matt
Offline Producer, Editor and Subtitles: Maureen Gosling

For Bookings & Publicity:

Jim Browne
Argot Pictures
jim@argotpictures.com
646-732-3725

ARGOT PICTURES