

## Mp3 Tortilla Factory - All That Jazz



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A big band Texas/Chicano sound 13 MP3 Songs in this album (46:45) ! Related styles: LATIN: Big Band Latino, LATIN: Tejano Details: Hes Spent A Lifetime bringing Tejano to the Masses Austin American STATESMAN Sunday, August 17, 2008 If you want to know what a paradox looks like, take a gander at Tony Guerrero. Known as "Ham" to his friends, Guerrero has been all around the Texas music scene as a performer, arranger, manager whatever needed doing, he did it. But unless you're a devotee of the genre known generally as Tejano music, you've probably never heard of him. Even so, Guerrero has sold a ton of records and rubbed artistic shoulders with giants over the course of a career that spans four decades. Like so many other musicians, Guerrero gravitated to Austin after a career that started out in San Angelo. That's right, he's a homey. In the 1970s, Guerrero's band Tortilla Factory was a hot ticket despite limited promotion and airplay. At 64, his health is failing. He needs a kidney transplant. A little thing like that, however, doesn't dull Guerrero's devotion to a unique genre of Texas music influenced by Mexican, jazz, big band, country, R&B and rock 'n' roll. You can argue about what Tejano music is exactly, but there is no arguing that Tejano musicians had to learn a variety of styles and rhythms because their audiences demanded it. The people who bought their records and paid to dance to the music live embraced Little Richard as well as Little Joe. The result is a musical expression of Texas Chicano attitude with lots of horns. Though their fans loved them, critics and radio stations generally ignored them. Even the programs with a Latino play list generally snubbed Tejano music and still do a source of tension between Mexican Americans and radio stations aimed at Mexican immigrants. It all brings to mind the lyrics to "I Dig Rock and Roll Music": "I think I could say somethin' if you know what I mean / But if I really say it, the radio won't play it ... " Even if the radio didn't play it, that unique style of music took root and flourished. Guerrero is seeking to revive the magic that Tortilla Factory conjured back

in the '70s. He's produced one CD and just released "All That Jazz." He even lured Bobby Butler, known as "El Charro Negro" back into the game. An African American, Butler sings Chicano style Spanish. He is "the only black American in the world singing the Tejano thing to perfection," Guerrero said. Nat King Cole cut albums in Spanish, but they were Mexican ballads. Butler is puro Chicano. Guerrero started his own label, Tortilla Records, and thus puts the promotion and artistic direction of the product in his hands. The Web allows Guerrero to bypass radio stations and critics. "We have reached a point in our lives that the Internet opened up avenues we never had before. Tortilla is loved and appreciated in places like Brazil, the U.K., Mexico. In only two performances we've done in the last two years our attendance was over 1,500 people both times," Guerrero said. "We don't wear cowboy hats, boots, wranglers, no accordion. Our two most outstanding traits remain our versatility and sophistication." Guerrero and other Tejano troubadours were the connecting tissue of Chicano culture in their heyday. They provided the bilingual sound track of our lives not to mention all those memories of Saturday night dances that provided rhythmic relief from drab lives. Sociology aside, it was and is just damn good music. Buzz up!

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