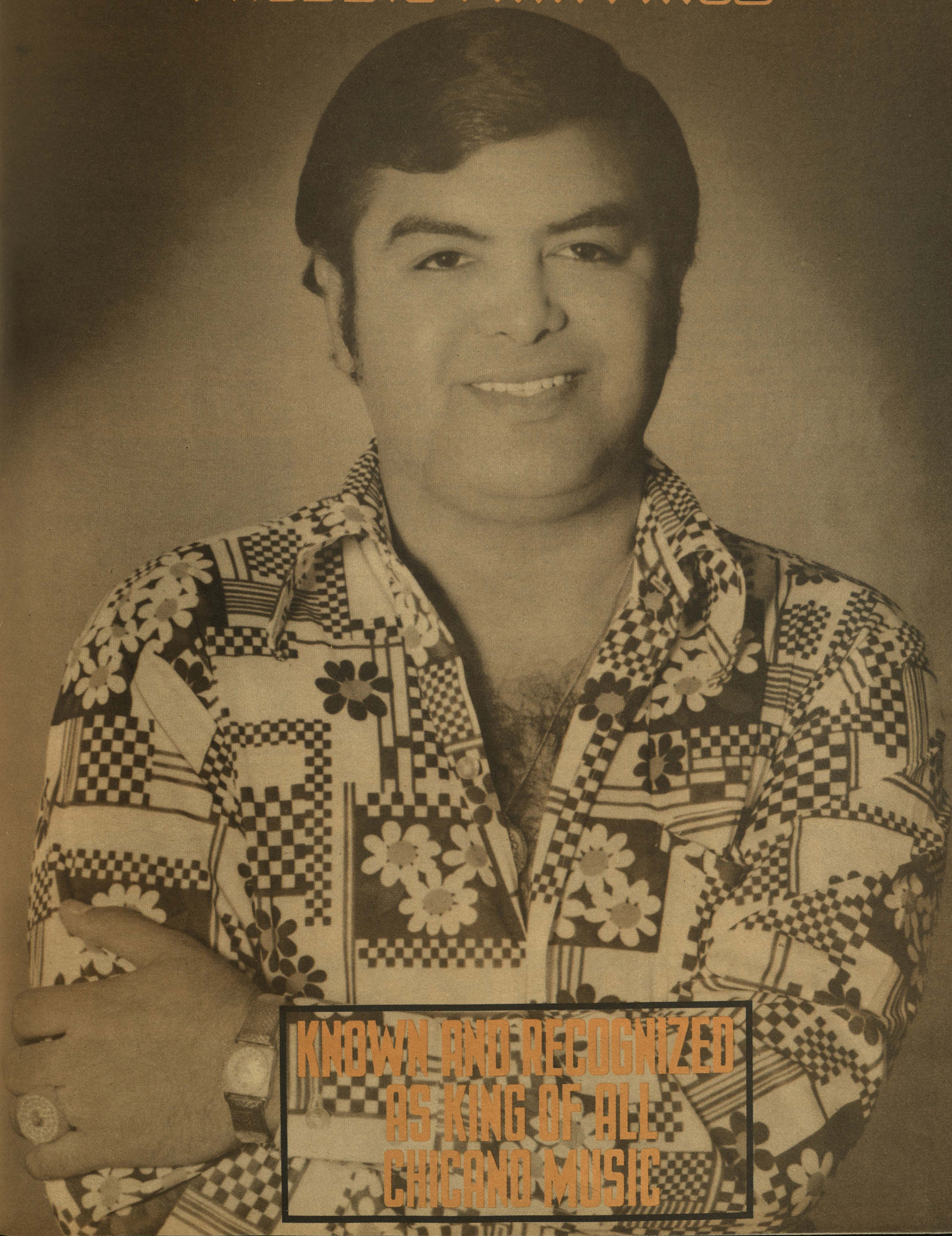


FREDDIE MARTINEZ



KNOWN AND RECOGNIZED
AS KING OF ALL
CHICANO MUSIC

Freddie Martinez Brings Recognition and Respectability To Chicano Music

Just as Elvis Presley is generally regarded as the man who brought respectability to rock 'n roll and the Beatles are credited with popularizing the English movement, such is the fate of Freddie Martinez in the increased recognition of the music that is currently one of the fastest growing entertainment businesses in the world — Chicano Music.

Martinez does not take credit for starting this brand of music that grew out of a combination of Mexican standards and conjunto arrangements, but he is recognized as the person who brought stability and respect to the entire industry. In the process of laying the groundwork, Martinez has reached super-star status and has become the top act on the entire Chicano circuit.

To know Freddie Martinez is to understand his gigantic success. He is a dynamo of movement, whether he is on the stage entertaining thousands of fans or in the office running his complex of companies under the Freddie Records banner.

From the time Martinez was growing up in Corpus Christi, Texas, there was never any doubt as to his future fate in the music business. On his mother's side of the family, there was an abundance of musical talent. His uncles, Ralph and Bobby Galvan, were the recognized musical leaders of the Corpus Christi area, and their Galvan Brothers Band played regularly at the top Country Clubs and area dances throughout South Texas.

These two men were the musical force in Martinez' life, and it was in their Galvan Ballroom that he made his vow to become not only a good musician, but the best musician in Texas. Martinez loved to accompany his parents to the dances at the ballroom and listen to the innovators of the Tex-Mex music that, in itself, was as unique during those early days as it is today. He studied the arrangements of the undisputed originator of the music, Beto Villa, and listened intently as Balde Gonzales played his way into the hearts of the Mexican-American population of Texas.

Freddie's brother, Lee, was also seriously interested in music as a career and when he was 13, Freddie would challenge his older brother to hours of musical competition to see who could play the most songs on the trumpet.

It was inevitable that Martinez would start his own band and choose the Tex-Mex musical sound as his specialty over the jazz sound that was more popular with many of the Latin Musicians of the day.

Conjunto music, which featured the accordion as the main instrument, and the big band sound were the popular musical styles that appealed to the hard working Mexican-American during those days, but Martinez was aware of the change that Villa and Gonzales were bringing into these areas and made the decision that his band would move into the new Tex-Mex style of music.

The trumpet was Freddie's favorite instrument and he played his heart out while fronting the band in those early days, but it was the unavailability and undependability of

singers that forced him to lay his trumpet aside at regular intervals and become lead singer for the band.

Those times were hard for the band and especially for Martinez. Work was irregular despite the band's popularity and it seemed that there was always the problem of making good money. It was a never ending struggle to make a living and pay for the equipment and instruments that seemed to lead from one job to the next.

Wanting to be close to music in everything he did, Martinez took a job as a local disc jockey on a Spanish language radio station in Corpus Christi and spent several years spinning records during the day and playing jobs with the band at night.

As the result of recording for various labels during these hard times, Martinez soon became convinced that the success of a company lies in the fact that they must produce a good product and there must be adequate capitol for promotion once the product is released. During those years of moving from one record company to another, Freddie was observing the entire Chicano music industry with an eagle eye. He noticed that many companies failed because of distribution problems and especially because some of the middlemen in the Tex-Mex industry were very slow in the payment of their bills. The lessons learned during this time was the basis upon which Freddie Martinez built his gigantic successes of today.

A SMALL Empire, the Result of a \$400 Investment

And, at this point in time, no one can question that Martinez is the rock upon which the Chicano musical industry is built. Since he saved \$400 to start his own company in 1970, Martinez has become a super star that shines brightly wherever Chicano music is heard throughout the United States. His Freddie Records complex, which includes his executive offices, a warehouse and his own recording studio, occupies a large, expensive tract of land just one block away from Corpus Christi's beautiful bayfront.

Freddie's elegant home, a showplace of exquisite beauty, nestles on the edge of an elaborate golf course in the city's Country Club addition. It has become the stopping off place for the top names in the music industry, ranging from record executives to Texas and United States Senators and Representatives.

Martinez attributes his fantastic success to the fact that he has retained control over the bulk of decisions that govern his company. He handles his booking engagements that keep him on the road up to 38 weeks of the year, playing dates all over the United States, from California to Florida to Chicago. Despite the fact that he is on the road a large amount of the time, Martinez keeps in close contact with the everyday business of his company at all times.

"One of the best moves that I've made in the company's success was to bring my brother, Lee, from Houston to help run the company," Martinez admits. "Lee knows the music business better than anyone else I might have found. He's not only a top musician, but he's also an excellent businessman." Lee Martinez supervises the day to day operation of Freddie Records with the help of Lee Martinez, Sr., the duo's father. Jim West, who recorded Martinez' first big hit record, "Botancito de Carino" and "Necesito tu Amor", runs the recording studio and has stayed on to engineer everyone of Martinez' hits including his gold record album, "Te Traiga Estas Flores."

Already the giant of the Chicano music industry, Freddie Records is busy expanding in several directions. At one time a single artist company, the label is adding some of the top names in the Chicano industry to its recording roster. Freddie Records now produces and releases product for Ram & Henry, Los Bandidos, and Lenny Salinas, all currently doing well on the Chicano music scene.

"The company's next big move is to be in two directions," Martinez explains. "We are now ready to move into all areas of the English music market and are looking for talent that will represent us well in the various recording areas of Anglo music."

"Perhaps the most important move is toward the movie industry for our company. I know this sounds unreal, but I am convinced this is the natural direction in which to move the company."



Freddie on stage before huge crowd in Monterrey, Mexico.

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Martinez became interested in the movie areas following his performance with Mexican film star Tony Aguilar in the movie, "La Muerte del Pancho Villa." Martinez had a small part in the motion picture, but his influence packed the movie houses where the picture was shown in Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, and Corpus Christi, as well as in Mexico. When Martinez appeared on the screen to sing a song, the crowds stood and cheered. "The picture reportedly grossed enough in Texas, alone, to pay the production expenses of the film," Martinez points out. "I'm convinced that a good picture with top Chicano stars could make excellent money for our company."

Martinez also points out the fact that over 10,000 Mexican youngsters from Monterrey met him at the airport and nearly tore him apart with worship when he performed there in 1972. "This proves that Mexico is also ready for Chicano music," Martinez adds.

Freddie Martinez Three Ventures, Three Successes

When Freddie Martinez walked into the front offices of Studio B Recording near the beautiful bayfront of Corpus Christi to spend the \$400 he had saved to start Freddie Records, it seemed unbelievable that soon this same young man would not only build his entertainment complex right on that very spot, but would also have one of the most highly successful record companies in the world, all built on a sound that is now sweeping into all areas of the country.

At that time in 1970, Martinez was a local Chicano band leader who had recorded with several Spanish labels with very little success. He had come to the conclusion that starting his own company was the only way he could govern his own destiny. So with \$400 and a strong belief in himself, Freddie Martinez recorded a song entitled "Necesito Tu Amor" and started on his way to building a musical empire in the Chicano industry.

This first song on his Freddie Record label became an immediate hit, and by the time he recorded "Botancito de Carino," he knew he was on his way to building a healthy record company in his home city of Corpus Christi.

With knowledge gained over several years recording with other companies, Martinez founded his company by aligning with recognized distributors like Manuel Rangel of San Antonio and others who were gaining a good reputation in the industry. Those distributors and rack jobbers that he knew to be a bit slow in paying were sent records only C.O.D. or not at all. In turn, Martinez instituted a policy that required his own company to pay their bills on time as well.

Because of this prompt payment policy, Martinez immediately became the "golden haired boy" of the Chicano industry among suppliers such as Ralph Jalufka of Houston Record Pressing who assisted in every way he could to assure the success of Martinez.

The release of the album entitled "Te Traiga Estas Flores" sent Martinez roaring to the top of the industry, and has become a classic as one of the few gold records produced in the Chicano music vein. The album still appears on Chicano charts across the nation.

"Te Traigo Estas Flores" is only one in a long list of successful recordings produced by Freddie. Other hits include the ever favorite, Freddie's hit recording of "Una Estrellita Llora". Also listed among Freddie's hit songs are: "Regalito de Dios", "La Lamparita", "Mi Arbol y Yo", "Ahora Que Soy Libre", "Munequita de Canela", "Farolito de Amor", and the long-standing favorite, "El Contrabando de El Paso".

It's not unusual to find two and sometimes as many as three of Freddie's albums among the top 15 in the Texas charts as listed by Billboard. Freddie's recordings have appeared in all Chicano charts across the country, including such areas as Chicago, Los Angeles, and Miami. "Te Traigo Estas Flores", which broke nationwide and into Mexico and South America, appeared numerous times in the New York chart, which rarely lists Chicano music.

Having established himself as a legitimate label, Martinez decided to stay in Corpus Christi, rather than moving to a larger city as many had recommended. He bought Studio B Recording where he had recorded his hit records and enlarged the facility to include executive offices and a large warehouse. Because of the popularity of Freddie Records, the City of Corpus Christi has profited from the company's location there, as the area has become known world-wide to music promoters and musicians.

Despite a large amount of time on the road, Martinez has set the tempo for his company's growth, with plans now to move into the English areas of music and to advance into the motion picture industry.

"There are still a lot of things to be done in the Chicano music industry," Martinez explains. "Things like getting the music accepted in all parts of the United States, in

Europe, and in South America, but I also feel that the company needs to expand in other areas as well. We are at a point now where we can do this."

Already underway are plans to produce a major Chicano motion picture, an area that Martinez feels is wide open because that segment of the population is relying only on Mexican product at the present time. Top Chicano record artists currently have to go to Mexico and take minor parts in motion pictures, which in turn, draw large crowds because of those artists appearances in the films. Freddie Records is already going full speed in this direction and Martinez feels this is a logical move for his company.

Another important area of growth is the Anglo music industry. With Freddie Records already well known to various parts of the music industry, Martinez feels he is in a good position to move in to that area with very little problems. Such top artists as Sam Neely and country's Don Williams have already used his recording studio and he is sure that the company can be successful in a venture that would encompass both contemporary and country music areas.

Martinez, himself, currently releases three LPs and six singles per year all of which continue to sell extremely well. Recently, the company has started releasing product on Ram & Henry, Los Bandidos, and Lenny Salinas. Record sales on all three artists have been very good, according to Lee Martinez, who handles the day to day operation of the company.

"I consider Freddie Records as a very young, progressive company," Martinez explains. "As long as we can continue to explore and grow, I feel the entire music industry, as well as various other entertainment areas, are open to us for expansion and are important to our success in the future."

If the growth of Freddie Records over the past three years is any indication, generations to come will continue to feel the strong influence of the Freddie Records complex as well.

Freddie Martinez is batting 1,000 as all three of his ventures are successful at this point.

His band is in constant demand across the United States and Mexico. In Mexico he has performed in such places as Nuevo Laredo, Monterrey, Guadalajara, Zacatecas, Saltillo, Ciudad Mante and Nueva Rosita, Cuauila.

In Los Angeles, San Jose, Fresno, Oakland and Stockton, California, Freddie is in constant demand. He recently completed a nine day performance at the Million Dollar Theatre in Los Angeles, one of the few Chicanos to perform there.

He has made a success of his record company by giving the public the kind of music they want to hear. His records are in demand where records are sold. He produces other groups on Freddie Records, with a different sound but with the never ending goal of trying to please the record buying public.

He took a faltering recording studio and in a short time made it pay off. This he did by catering to all customers, and trying to give them what they want. Many are the times when Freddie encourages young bandleaders to produce their own records.

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LOS ANGELES,
CALIFORNIA

Freddie In Chicago

By Joe Zuniga

I remember when Freddie made his first appearance before the Chicago public. Frank and I booked him for a week-end, his first performance outside of Texas. Our contacts had assured us that it would be a successful venture, but neither Frank nor I were prepared for the mobs that met us that first night.

We started the publicity one month before Freddie's performance, and from the first day, all you heard was the anticipation of the public. By the time Freddie hit Chicago, the reaction had snow-balled, and we had the largest crowd we'd ever seen.

The lines for tickets formed early, and we had to turn away hundreds of disappointed fans.

Ever since, it's been like a love affair between Freddie and his Chicano fans. They come from as far as Michigan, hundreds of miles away, to enjoy a few hours with this Chicano Tom Jones, and from the looks of things and the mobs we turn away, it's getting better all the time.



Zunigas — first promoters to book Freddie outside of Texas.

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Industry Story:

A Sleeping Giant Awakens

The story of the Chicano music industry has been told many times in many various ways, but Freddie Martinez feels that it is the future rather than the past that holds the destiny of the industry.

This brand of unique music, known by such names as Tex-Mex, Norteno and Chicano, began in the late forties along the Texas-Mexico border and has dominated the musical tastes of the Mexican-American in the United States ever since. It has sustained itself despite the many, many problems it had to overcome, and with new and young leaders like Martinez, the music continues to grow at an unbelievable pace.

"So much has been written as to the origination of the music and people who were responsible for it," Martinez explains. "To me, the important question is not how it began, but where it is going."

In the mind of Freddie Martinez, there is not much doubt as to the direction that Chicano music is moving. Already his company has brought the music past what many believed to be immovable barriers. Freddie Records has set the pace for the music's growth into various areas, including recognition in Mexico and throughout the United States.

Where it was once only Texans who were exposed to Chicano music, today a successful tour for Martinez will take him to California, Detroit, Chicago, Phoenix and various parts of Florida, which in itself is a tribute to the growth and expansion of the entire Chicano music industry.

Because the industry has not become a tight organization, as such, there are still problems that arise from the lack of faith by good distributors in handling the music where there are an abundance of Chicanos in some parts of the country.

"These distributors are not yet aware of the power of the music mainly because they do not fully understand

it," Martinez relates. "When distributors all over the United States begin to see the money that can be made by handling our product and promoting it, then we all will profit even more."

Another key problem, according to Martinez, is the lack of airplay available on radio stations in various parts of the country. Again, he attributes the problem to a lack of understanding. Wherever Martinez plays, he draws large crowds with very little air promotion in many cases.

"The people are buying our records when they can find them," he explains, "because we see this in our personal appearances across the country."

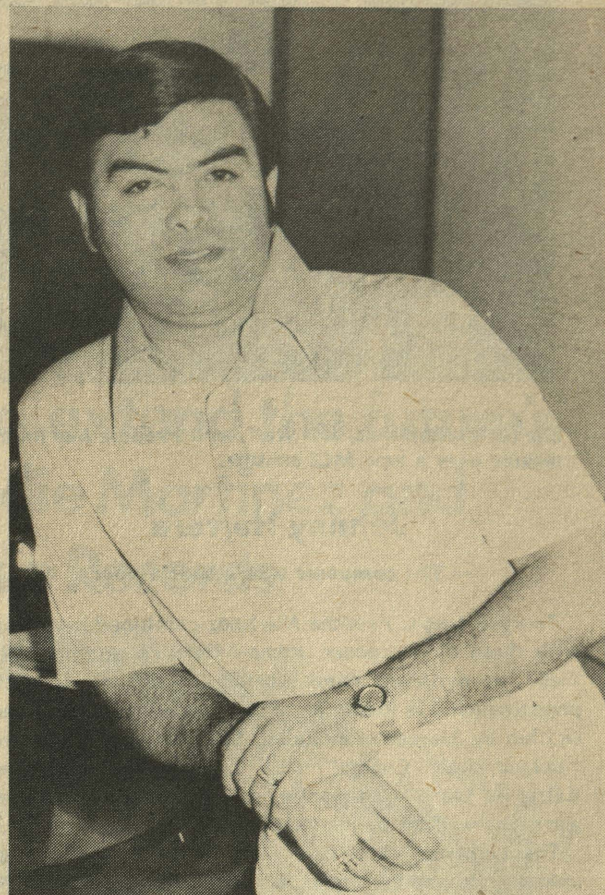
There has been a definite change in the young Latin-American record buyers. They are highly bilingual and are as comfortable in buying a Freddie Martinez album as they are in the purchase of a Grand Funk record. Martinez feels this wide area of musical tastes in the youngsters is the key to his music's wide acceptance.

Martinez also feels that many musicians are making a mistake by attempting to "jazz up" the basic Chicano sound or to create difficult arrangements in their sound.

"I've discovered the people enjoy a basic rhythm with an abundance of emotion in the lyrics and the vocal arrangements," he points out. "The Chicano likes his music to be simple, yet to mean something emotional to him."

Although many problems still exist in the Chicano music industry, Martinez feels that the whole industry is on the verge of exploding on an international scale. Once the United States is correctly exposed, which is rapidly being done, then there are South America, Spain, and other Spanish speaking countries to conquer.

Freddie Records and Freddie Martinez are moving the entire Chicano industry in that direction — a direction that can only bring a greater recognition to the music that is destined to become a viable musical force in the lives of Spanish speaking people throughout the world.



Freddie Martinez, taking an infrequent break during a busy schedule.

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UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

Freddie
Martinez

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HOUSTON RECORDS

Recording Studio:

A Gamble Pays Off

The chief engineer of Studio B Recording in Corpus Christi could not possibly have known his destiny when he sat behind the recording console regulating the controls in 1970 while Freddie Martinez was recording his first song at that facility.

Today, Jim West, that same engineer, is working for Freddie Martinez.

During those days before Martinez choose to use the studio, West well remembers his and another engineer's disappointment when told that the sound they were producing was not good because they did not understand the Chicano sound.

"The other engineer, Mike Taylor, and I almost cried when we were told this by some of the Chicano producers," West remembers. "I knew they were wrong, because I had been around the sound all my life and had even produced a Chicano hit called 'La Pachuca'.

When Martinez approached the studio with his \$400 savings, he and West immediately respected each other's talents and both worked hard to get a good sound. As the result of that session, which produced Martinez' first hit record, West has recorded every Martinez release since that time, and Martinez, in turn, ended up buying the studio and turning it into his Freddie Records complex.

The studio is now a bee hive of activity as both Chicano and Anglo artists use the facilities on a regular basis.

Following the purchase of the studio, Martinez installed a new MCI board and updated the equipment to what is now known as one of the top recording studios in Texas. West continues to handle both Chicano and English sessions with equal ease and has been instrumental in the popular Freddie Martinez sound.

Martinez sees the recording studio as a natural growth area in his company. "So much of our business is built around sound that it is only natural for me to want to have a good studio," he explains.

Although he plans to expand into various other areas of music, Martinez sees no jingle or music production possibilities in the near future, simply because of lack of time. The studio is very busy as it is now, He adds.

West feels that the studio's success is a result of the atmosphere that prevails when a group is recording. "First, we have a beautiful city from which we work," West explains. "Then we strive for a relaxed, family-type atmosphere within the studio itself. We feel we go that extra step to make each session the best possible session that it can be."

With Freddie Martinez as the dominate force in the Chicano music industry, his recording studio is playing an integral part in the future growth of his recording empire. Martinez' success results in the putting of trust and respect into people he believes in.



Lee (Lito) Martinez, Jim West, with Freddie Martinez, looking over a new MCI console.

Johnny Herrera

— The composer with a special touch.

Ten years ago, Freddie Martinez combined his talents with those of composer Johnny Herrera and together, these two dynamos have boosted Chicano music to the phenomenon it is today. Most of Freddie's hits have been written by Herrera, including the first major success, "Botoncito de Carino". "La Lamparita," and "Una Estrellita Llaro", a favorite among Freddie's followers, were also written by Herrera.

The composer has been able to capture Freddie's unique style and continues to write the kind of music the public demands. Johnny writes, Freddie sings, the public clamors for more, and the beat goes on.

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Freddie To Infiltrate Movie Industry

Horizons are made to be climbed and explored. This is the belief of Freddie Martinez, who has already climbed and explored many horizons in the Chicano music industry. The next horizon for his Freddie Records complex is the movie industry.

Recently, Martinez was asked to appear in a motion picture being produced by Mexican film star Tony Aguilar across the border and agreed to do so. As the result of his part in the picture, the movie, "La Muerte de Pancho Villa," became a top box office draw in Texas and the Southwest during its initial showings.

During the movie's premier in Houston, large crowds flooded the theatre and almost ripped the clothes off Martinez during his personal appearance in conjunction with the film. Crowds packed theatres in San Antonio, Corpus Christi, Laredo, and Dallas.

To the average young businessman this would not have seemed too important, but Freddie Martinez is not average. Over the years, he has learned to be very aware of what is happening around him. It took eight years of hard times for him to correct many problems in the Chicano music industry and to build a very successful record company in the process.

Now, Martinez sees the motion picture industry as the next logical step in his company's expansion.

"One reason this movie from Mexico did as well as it did in the Southwest was because of Chicano music's growing popularity," Martinez points out. "Because of the music, the picture had the same attraction to the Chicanos as did the brief appearance of rock and roll stars in successful pictures on audiences during the mid and late fifties."

Freddie Records is already busy working toward the production of a major motion picture starring Martinez and several Chicano music performers. Not only does Martinez feel that the picture will draw crowds throughout the United States in heavily populated Latin areas, but he feels that Mexican and South American audiences will enjoy the movie as well.

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Success or Failure

By Lee Martinez

Lee Martinez, General Manager of Freddie Records gives Johnny Gonzales of El Zarape Records from Dallas much credit in that he gave the Chicano Music Industry the shot in the arm it needed back in the early 60's, back when the industry was at the crossroads of success or failure.

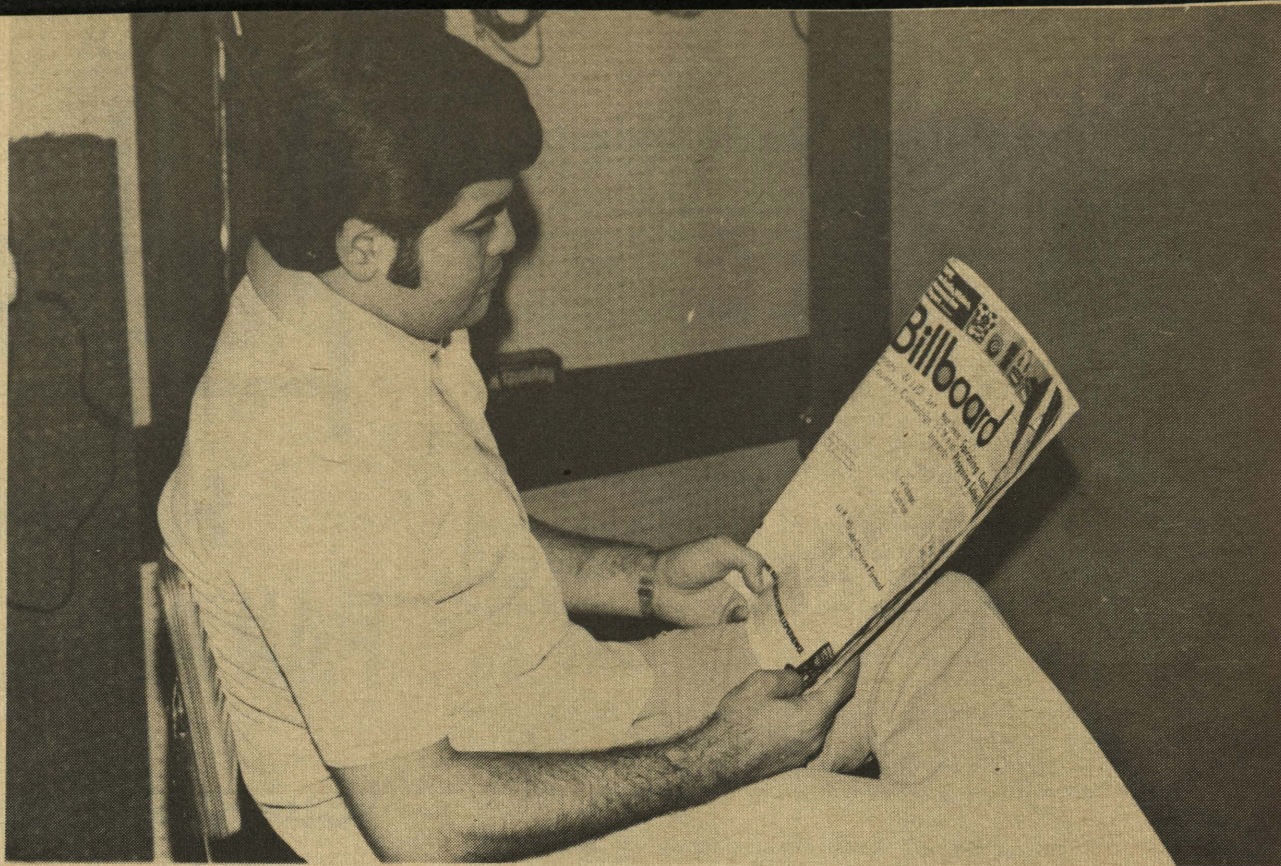
Gonzales brought back to the industry the long overlooked and forgotten art of Record Promotion! He employed some of the tools needed for success in promotion, mainly persistence and determination, and a lot of money. He let nothing stand in his way when it came to promoting a new record, or even a group that he had under contract. He took both the record and the group and gave them first class promotion," says Lee Martinez. "This proved to be very successful and thus Johnny Gonzales and El Zarape Records very quickly became synonymous with good promotion and top sales." "Johnny had a big influence on the Industry in the early 60's no doubt about it," says Lee.

We at Freddie Records try to follow the same formula, but we also insist that the group do its part in promoting themselves, mainly give the dance promotion and the public their best at all times. The group must be in good standing with both if they expect a return engagement.

Return engagements mean more exposure for the group, more exposure means more record sales, more sales means a bigger turnout for their performance, and this is followed by better wages and more return engagements. This cycle must not be broken if both the group and their records are to succeed.



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Freddie Martinez, reading Billboard magazine.

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