

Latin Mandolin

"La Rielera"

by Sergio Lara

The concept of "*La Rielera*" or "*The Railroad woman*" was a very strong one during the Mexican Revolution; the role of women in the history of Mexico and the importance on which the train and railroads in general became to the country's development.

My grandfather was a train supervisor in the railroad in Mexico and his mother, my great grandmother told me a few stories about how important the role of women was during the revolution, with babies being born there and women with rifles protecting the young ones and escaping from town to town from the scary fights and the drunk soldiers. Maybe that is why trains and the whole railroad theme is one of my favorites. As a kid I traveled a lot by train with my family and that is something I miss these days.

"*La Rielera*" is a Corrido and it is a Mexican Polka.

The Check Polka, The Polish Mazurka and Redowa, The Scottish Schottische, English Square dancing, and the Austrian Waltz were brought into Mexico as ballroom dancing by the silly Mexican aristocracy of the early to mid-1800's. By the time dictator Porfirio Diaz took power (1870), there were already many local compositions inspired by these rhythms. The lower classes, still in servitude, mocked the rich and their snotty rhythms giving them a political-comical twist, creating thus the ubiquitous "Mexican polka" and the musical narrating "corridos". As the flame of the revolution ran rampant in the North, the Polka and the corrido became a sort of musical newspapers, since most people were illiterate at the time. Most polkas and corridos created then took on famous female soldier names: Adelita, Marieta, Juana Gallo, Rielera, Jesusita, etc. The dancing took on local characteristics, and the dress fashions of the late 1800's, early 1900's American frontier settlers. Before the revolution, the German settlers of Texas brought in their own musical instruments: the accordion, the sax, and bass guitar and the original taste of these rhythms, which were immediately absorbed and adopted by the locals creating the "conjunto" out of these elements. Border music is still en vogue today, dancing and the men's outfit have suffered little or no change. The polkas, redovas, mazurkas, schottische, the waltz, and the corrido are still big favorites in Northern Mexico and Southern U.S. one hundred years after their introduction into Mexico and boasting a proud history that tells about the joys and sorrows of nortehños.

"*La Rielera*" is a fast melody, very similar to a fast bluegrass rhythm and has been sung and recorded by many artists, from well known Mexican singers like Jorge Negrete to Pop star Linda Ronstadt.

LA RIELERA

Yo soy rielera y tengo mi Juan,
el es mi vida yo soy su querer;
cuando me dicen que ya se va el tren,
adiós mi rielera ya se va tu Juan.

Cuando dice el conductor,
va salir para San Juan,
le llevo su canastita
con la que va a refinar.

Tengo mi par de pistolas,
con su cachas de marfil,
para darme de balazos
con los del ferrocarril.

Tengo mi par de pistolas
con su parque muy cabal,
una para mi querida
y otra para mi rival.

Adiós muchachos de Lerdo,
de Gómez y de Torreón,

ya se van los garroteros,
ya se acabo la función.

Tengo mi par de caballos
para la Revolución,
uno se llama el Jilguero
y otro de llama el Gorrión.

Dicen que los carrancistas
parecen un alacrán,
cuando ven a los villistas
alzan la cola y se van.

So porque me ves de traje
crees que te voy a pedir,
solo quiero prieta chula
tus favores conseguir.

Si porque me ves con botas
piensas que soy melitar,
soy un pobre rielero
del Ferrocarril Central.

La Rielera

trad. arr. Lara

G D7

5-2-0 0-0-0-0 5-5-5-5-2-0 5 4-4-4-4-4-4-4-4 4-5-3-2

G

2-3-2-2-0-0 5-5-5-0-1 1-2-2-2-2-2-2-2 2-0-2-4 4-3-5-5-4-5

D7 G D7

0-0-0-5-0 0-2-2-2-2-2-2 5-5-3-3-2 2-3-2-0-0-2 3-3-3-2-3-2-0

G

5-5-5-5-5-5-5 5-5-2-0 5 0-2-2-5-0 5 2-2-2-5-0

20 D7 G

25 D7

29 G

About Sergio Lara

Sergio Lara plays a 1980 Gibson F-5L mandolin, uses Gibson Monel Steel strings and the round side of a Fender Heavy pick. For over 20 years, Sergio has been respected and considered as one of the best artists in acoustic contemporary instrumental music. His last recording with the well-known Latin guitar duo Lara & Reyes, "World Jazz", received a Latin Grammy Award nomination for Best Instrumental Pop Album in 2001. His music is best described as New Acoustic with a Latin influence, which falls under the category of Contemporary Instrumental Music and World Music.

Please visit <http://www.sergiolara.com> and you can contact me with your questions and comments.