



(Accordionist **Steve Jordan** was a true legend. A fantastic musician, a virtuoso. Yet on the flip side, he was also reclusive, eccentric, a loner. In this recent profile, our correspondent **Ramon Hernandez** detailed the man and the talents that Jordan represented.)

Among the first Spanish words that **Steve Jordan**'s peers use to describe him is sabio and sabiduria.

"Esteban Jordan es un sabio," **Salvador "El Pavo" García** said in the first of his

glowing terms. "I have to give credit where it's due and Esteban dominates the accordion more highly than anyone else because of his love for the art. He is a musical inventor."



Sabio translates to sapient, wise, all-knowing and skillful. A few years ago, the tables were turned and an interviewer asked Jordan for his opinion on Flaco Jiménez, Jordan answered, "Flaco and I are like day and night, like oil and water."

“I’ll go along with that because his style is nothing like mine and my style is nothing like his,” Jiménez agreed.

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“Steve plays a lot of jazz and rock’n’roll, which I can do, but his style is more progressive and precise because he knows where he’s going when I am more spontaneous. And I admire his sabiduria. The difference between him and me in spite of my knowledge of jazz and rock and roll is that I am more rancheron (rural) and he is more urban.

“In short, he has a great knowledge and he is tremendous. Many can imitate him, but few can compare because what they are lacking is originality,” Jiménez added.

Sabiduria translates to knowledge and wisdom gained from learning and experience and the world famous 70-year-old squeeze box man has been honing his craft since he was seven and one of the youngest of fifteen siblings.

After he mastered a couple dozen musical instruments, he taught a few of his brothers how to play so they too could lay down their bags and leave the fields as a part of his group -- the latest being Boni and Silver.

“Steve Jordan was ahead of his time; and when he was progressive in an era of straight forward tradition conjunto, people just couldn’t understand him,” explained Héctor Ríos, executive producer of “Las Dos Amigas” on Telemundo.

Accordionist Joél Guzmán and Bravo Combo, among others, say Jordan is a musical genius and Sunny Saucedo raves about Jordan’s technical knowledge, which allowed him to take his music to a higher level.

Jordan

has also influenced Albert Zamora; and the latter two have both recorded some of Jordan’s tunes.

While many state that his music stands alone and he is his own genre, Jordan’s first love is jazz. As a result, he has performed at the Monterrey and Berlin Jazz festivals plus performed with Willie Bobo’s jazz group.

Rock and roll also has a special place in his heart and he is so good at improvising on the spot, he has performed alongside Carlos Santana and the Grateful Dead’s Jerry Garcia plus Poncho Sánchez – all on stage at the same time. This video can be seen on www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhX9DJIZ1NU and they really get down in an impromptu 1970s jam session. Once you get there, one will see choices for more Jordan videos.

That’s quite a feat when he has once recorded over 25 vinyl albums, most of them for local

Texas companies such as Falcon, ARV, Omega, R&N, his own El Parche label, Freddie and Hacienda, at the time distributed by RCA. There's also approximately the same number of compact discs, but they're all re-issues and compilations of his previous work on Arhoolie, Clan in Japan and several budget labels. In view of the heights he rose to, that's quite a testimony to Jordan's innate talent. The only thing Jordan has earned, but hasn't been paid, is royalties for which he rightfully bitter.

What more can you say about the accordion master that hasn't been said before in numerous newspapers and magazines, including some in Japan plus a gazillion websites. He has appeared on two movies – "True Stories" and "Born in East L.A." and the way he modified his accordion result in creating the Steve Jordan Tex-Mex Rockordion, which was manufactured and sold by Hohner.

For those young readers not acquainted with Jordan, for starters, this writer recommends they listen to his recordings of "Stone Soul Pinic," "Nunca Iras Al Cielo," "Kranke," "Midnight Blues," which sounds both French and jazzy; "El Rancho Grande" and "La Bamba" as you've never heard them before and "Call Me" which cleverly guides into "La Cucaracha."

Then there's "Jhonny El Pachuco," a tune all homies will dig; "Squeeze Box Man," "I Woke Up This Morning," "Turn On Your Love Light" and "Run For Your Life" and you will see how this tune influenced Question Mark and the Mysterians.

To be called "the best accordionist" by other accordionist is the highest of accolades and Jordan has earned it. To date,

Jordan

has been inducted into virtually every Tejano music and conjunto hall of fame and there is a rumor he may be inducted into next year's Premios A La Música Latina Hall of Fame. In addition, the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum will have a special

Steve

Jordan

display for its "Sabor Latino" exhibit which opens on February 9th.

At this writing Jordan and his two son's Steve III, guitar, screams and yells; and Richard, bass, congas and timbales plus his daughters, Anita and Estela on backup vocals, are putting the finishing touch on his next compact disc, a production titled "Carta Espiritual" at his own recording studio, which is at his Southside San Antonio home. When completed, it will be available for sale at gigs and at www.estebanjordan.com and www.myspace.com/estebanjordan.

Best of all, one can watch and listen to the genius at work with his two tall, güero, handsome sons each Friday night at Azeneth Dominguez's Saluté International Bar, a cozy little hangout on the North St. Mary's Street strip. Showtime is 10 p.m. and the great part is that everyone is virtually guaranteed a ringside seat. You will be amazed at the sound produced by the Jordan Dynasty along with just a set of drums.

You'll see Jordan having fun with his off-spring Steve III (Steve II lives in Georgia and Steve I is

the man himself), Richard, plus Alejandro “Alex” Valdez on drums. It is evident his sons are the torch bearers to carry on the Jordan legacy.

Esteban Jordan: 1939-2010