

STAMP SCOOP



LYDIA MENDOZA

Music sensation **Lydia Mendoza** was born to a musical family in Houston in 1916. Her father was a rail line mechanic who traveled back and forth between Texas and Mexico with his family in tow. Lydia was homeschooled by her mother, Leonor, who also taught her to sing and play guitar.

The Mendozas loved performing Tejano music, a sort of Tex-Mex folk music. They often supplemented their income by playing for Mexican American audiences in parish halls and restaurants. They toured by hitchhiking, and recorded their first album in 1928. Lydia ultimately began a solo career and with her signature 12-string guitar, made a name for herself in the 30s and 40s, performing hits such as "Mal Hombre" (Evil Man) and "Pero hay que Triste" (But Oh How Sad It Is).

Mendoza came to represent a distinct American culture. She was dubbed La Alondra de la Frontera ("meadowlark of the border") and La Cancionera de los Pobres ("songstress of the poor"). During her 60-year career, she recorded over 200 songs and 50 albums, and performed for President Jimmy Carter at the Kennedy Center. She received both the National Heritage Award and the National Medal of the Arts, and was inducted into both the Tejano and Conjunto Music Halls of Fame. Mendoza died in 2007 in San Antonio.

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