



SIMPLEMENTE LARA

Artist: José Rubén De León

Accompanied by pianist Aaron Ellington Prado and bassist George Prado

Produced by José Rubén De León

Engineered and Mixed by Joe Treviño

Running time: 68 minutes

Simplemente Lara is José Rubén De León's tribute to Agustín Lara, Mexico's most celebrated composer of the 1930's and 40's. The acclaimed San Antonio vocalist and actor has recorded 22 masterful renditions of Lara classics, with the accompaniment of father-and-son jazz duo, bassist George Prado and pianist Aaron Ellington Prado. Selections include the ever-popular "Veracruz," "Noche de Ronda," "Solamente una Vez," "Granada," and many more.

The CD is also a compilation of the songs performed live in De León's hit musical revue *Simplemente Lara*, which continues to sell out venues across Texas. It was by audience demand that the recording came into existence. De León has said both the CD and the show have created "a wonderful opportunity to showcase the music of Mexico's Golden Age, appealing to the Hispanic community and to all who love romantic music."

Because the show *Simplemente Lara* includes dramatized anecdotes from Lara's intriguing life, vast amounts of research went into discovering the man behind the music, the stories that informed his lyrics, and the history of the music itself. De León's interpretation of the music is thereby personal, unparalleled, and incredibly profound.

Where the casual listener might hear a list of love songs in Lara's repertoire, De León understands the complexity beneath the lyrics: "Lara started playing piano in the bordellos at age 13. He wrote songs of salvation for these women he wanted to rescue, but at the same time, he became a womanizer who wanted to keep them all to himself." De León delivers the lyrics as an actor reveals one's true character, and he delivers the music as though he were Lara's chosen student.

Although a number of skilled artists have covered Agustín Lara's work, some with highly-produced arrangements, De León's bare, unembellished interpretations come closer to Lara's original style, in which simple piano improvisations carried the heavy words of the man known as "El Músico Poeta." Pianist Aaron Ellington Prado, who represents the youngest of three generations of musicians contributing to this album, artfully borrows the piano stylings and flourishes Lara often presented on live, Mexican radio.

Reviewers have described De León's voice as "an attractive, velvety baritone flecked with a faint burr." Since Agustín Lara was known more for his composing skills than his singing ability, *Simplemente Lara* is a worthy tribute certain to delight listeners while sweeping them into a realm of romance and nostalgia.

Simplemente Lara was recorded at San Antonio's Blue Cat Studios with Grammy Award-winning recording engineer Joe Treviño,

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