



## Musical and Historical Background of Sabor a Mi

“Sabor a Mi” is an incredibly famous Mexican bolero written by Alvaro Carrillo. Carrillo wrote over three-hundred songs, but his most popular song was “Sabor a Mi.” The song was inspired by a beautiful moment that Carrillo and his wife shared a few years prior to the song being recorded. “Sabor a Mi” gained national traction after being recorded by Eydie Gormé and the trio Los Panchos in 1959. Since then, many artists have covered the song including, Luis Miguel a famous Mexican singer, EXO a popular K-pop boy group, and José José, another popular Mexican singer.

Alvaro Carrillo was born in Cacahuatpec in the state of Oaxaca on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 1919. During his youth, Carrillo would often help his friends take serenatas to their crushes. A serenata is when a mariachi or musician delivers a love message in the form of a song, typically outside of their loved one’s window. This form of music was popularized in the XVII century. Alvaro was not only a composer, but also a guitarist and singer. For the serenatas he would sing the same song every time, but he would change the lyrics according to the girl’s name. Alvaro Carrillo originally got a degree in architecture engineering, however, his passion for music led him to abandon his degree and pursue music.

“Sabor a Mi” was inspired by an incident that happened in December 1957. Alvaro Carillo and his fiancé Ana Maria Inchaustegui were having a candlelit dinner during which Alvaro was drinking. While Carillo drank he would kiss Ana, but she did not like the taste of liquor. After a while, Ana asked Alvaro to stop kissing her because he was going to get her drunk and all she could taste was the liquor on her lips. Carillo then answered, “The taste you carry on your lips is not liquor, it’s the taste of me.” It was in that moment that the couple realized that the phrase “the taste of me” or “Sabor a Mi” would become a song and Ana Inchaustegui decided to celebrate with Alvaro by sharing a glass of liquor (Canche).

There is some debate regarding the English translation of “Sabor a Mi” given that its direct translation is “The Taste of Me” which some might argue sounds vulgar. A better translation would be “The Essence of Me” which carries more of the intended meaning. “Sabor a Mi” has three verses and a chorus. the first verse says:

We enjoyed this love for so long

Our souls got so close that now

I carry your essence with me

But you also

Carry mine

Throughout the song Carillo expresses his love in such a way that some went as far as to call it the “most romantic bolero to ever exist.” (Canche.)

As Felix Contreras explained, a bolero is a form of love song that originated in Cuba in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Boleros became popular in Mexico in the 1940s. The songs would often be about topics

such as love, betrayal, and unrequited love (Contreras). The first boleros to be written in Mexico came from the state of Yucatán. The bolero that gained national fame was called “Morenita Mia” and it was written by Villareal Lozano in 1921(Imer.mx).

Tragically Alvaro Carillo and his wife passed away on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1969, after a car accident. Carillo’s family and their driver were on the highway to Mexico City when a truck going the wrong way crashed into them. Carillo perished a few minutes after the impact and Ana Maria Inchaustegui passed away the next morning. Only his children survived the accident (Canche).

Even though Alvaro Carillo has passed away, his legacy carries on; “Sabor a Mi continues to be one of Mexico’s most beloved songs. Songs like “Sabor a Mi” which have obtained worldwide recognition have pushed Mexican and Latin writers to push themselves to do bigger things and share their culture with the world. Sadly, there is still discrimination and injustices happening around the globe and people of color are still fighting to get representation. Latin songs that have attained national attention help the community not only feel proud of the heritage despite unfair circumstances but also help unite this community. At the end of the day, music is a universal language, and an amazing way to share things with the world.

## Work Cited

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