The Honor of Julian Chavez

The Honor of Julian Chavez
(Ken Graydon)

The stories come down from the Old Ones,
That at times in the full moon's pale light,
The spirit of Julian Chavez,
Can be heard as he rides through the night.
A clatter of hoofs in the courtyard,
The sound of a horse running fast,
Then fading away in the distance,
A feeling that someone has passed.

The mention of Julian Chavez
Is not taken lightly, Señor,
For his was a large reputation,
El Ladrón de Caballos Mejor!
Known best as Chavez El Rojo,
For the shade of his hair and mustache,
A horse thief renowned for his cunning.
There was no one more daring or rash.

To the rancho they call Buena Vista,
As the daylight declined in the West,
A strange caballero came riding,
Through gates never closed to a guest.
In the custom of old California,
"Mi casa, su casa" they would say.
A stranger was always welcome,
And never was one turned away.

This man wore the mark of a sheriff,
A man to be trusted on sight.
A chair was pulled up to the table,
And a room was prepared for the night.
With morning the stranger admired
The livestock, the orchards so green,
And preparing to leave said "Forgive me,
But there is one horse that I have not seen."

"A magnificent stallion, they told me,
A thoroughbred, one of the best.
I had hoped for a chance to admire him.
He was not in the barn with the rest."
"It is true, he is not with the others.

He sleeps in the house at my side,
For Chavez El Rojo would steal him.
He covets the stallion I ride."

Then loud came the laugh of the stranger,
As he bowed once again to his host,
"I am Julian Chavez El Rojo,
The one that you fear," was his boast.
"I came here in search of your stallion,
To steal him and ride him away,
But you fed me and housed me in friendship,
And that leaves me a debt to pay."

"By the honor of Julian Chavez,
I swear to you now as I stand,
Neither I nor my men shall annoy you.
I will not take your stallion so grand."
He mounted and wheeled in the courtyard,
"Hasta Luego" and a touch of the spur,
And Julian Chavez departed,
At ease in the saddle and sure.

In the fall at the round-up of cattle,
Vaqueros from nowhere appeared,
Skilled ropers and herders and riders,
To help with the tally of steers.
Their maestro would not hear of payment,
As the riders departed once more.
"It is Chavez El Rojo who sent us,
In thanks for your kindness, Señor."

HB
Oct01

Visit www.traditionalmusic.co.uk for more songs.