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It's fiesta time anytime with Los Lobos

Sound of the City HECTOR SALDAÑA



"Gates of Gold" would've been a better title for tonight's Arts San Antonio concert at the Majestic Theatre.

For one, Los Lobos is its star attraction and arrives basking in the glow of critical praise for its new album, last fall's bluesy, folk-rock roots record, "Gates of Gold."

For another, the title track is all about life's mysteries, old and new, "and stories to be told."

That's what one can expect when the legendary East Los Angeles rock band fronted by guitarists David Hidalgo and Cesar Rosas performs as part of Arts San Antonio's "Fiesta Mexico Americana!"

The multimedia concert also features Ballet Folklórico Mexicano, the exquisitely costumed and choreographed folkloric dance troupe from L.A.

Nothing against *zapatear* dancing, but Los Lobos have the amps.

Los Lobos play all kinds of places but theater shows are a treat. The band's fantastic gig at the Aztec Theatre in April 2014 with Robert Cray, celebrating its 40th anniversary (and tuning up for "Austin City Limits") rocked hard. A wild, long-ago night at Lila Cockrell Theatre in September 2002, which ended with the Guadalupe Dance Company up onstage joining in on "La Bamba," also comes to mind.

As Hidalgo said in an eTown webisode, the best Lobos shows are when things are "loose and everybody has fun."

That could be what's in store post-Majestic at Taco Haven in Southtown later tonight too. Why? Because Benny Harp and Max Baca & Los TexManiacs are slated to play "with some very special guests." Hmmm.

On stage

What: 'Fiesta Mexico Americana!' featuring Los Lobos and Ballet Folklórico Mexicano

When: 7:30 p.m. today

Where: Majestic Theatre, 224 E. Houston St.

Tickets: \$29-\$110, 210-226-3333, ticketmaster.com

It doesn't take a crystal ball to predict some of the Lobos may show up for Mexican food combo plates, cerveza and maybe a late-night jam.

Baca and his nephew, accordionist Josh Baca, will be lurking around at the Majestic earlier and might wind up onstage at the Arts San Antonio gig too. "It's highly likely," said Max Baca.

There's a strong tie between both acts.

The upcoming re-release of the TexManiacs' "Americano Groove" (produced by the Lobos' Steve Berlin) will feature two bonus party tracks recorded with Los Lobos at Blue Cat Studios way back in 2004 — the Sir Douglas Quintet's "She's About a Mover" and Sunny & the Sunglows' "Talk to Me."

The Bacas have been adding firepower to the Lobos of late — and vice versa. Los Lobos roared at John T. Floore Country Store last year with the Grammy-winning bajo sexto star and accordionist in tow. Likewise, the TexManiacs' opening set there was rock 'n' roll gritty, far outstripping the usual Tex-Mex and conjunto.

"It just brings us to another level, definitely," Baca said. "They're really good friends."

That's the gravitational pull of Los Lobos' organic Chicano rock. "It still comes out sounding like Los Lobos," Hidalgo



Larry Busacca / Getty Images

Los Lobos (from left) Steve Berlin, Conrad Lozano, David Hidalgo, Louie Perez and Cesar Rosas received critical acclaim for their "Gates of Gold" CD. They perform at the Majestic Theatre today.

Heading to the hills

After a likely, but unofficial collaboration today at the Majestic Theatre and elsewhere, Los Lobos and Los TexManiacs will get together again Sunday in Luckenbach. This time, it will be an official collaboration, as the show is billed as "Los Lobos + TexManiacs."

The Valentine's Day show at the historic dance hall starts at 7:30 p.m., with doors opening at 6:30. About 400 tickets will be sold, including 50 VIP/meet-and-greet tickets for \$75. Regular tickets will cost \$35. Call 888-311-8990 or go to luckenbach-



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texas.com.

The Los Lobos/TexManiacs show wraps up a big, love-infused weekend in the Hill Country hamlet that starts with a pair of Hug-In dances featuring ace honky-tonker Dale Watson tonight and the legendary Gary P. Nunn on Saturday (the latter is known as the Valentine's Ball). Both start at 8 p.m.; tickets cost \$15 and \$20, respectively.

— Robert Johnson



Courtesy photo

Texas singer and songwriter Gary P. Nunn.

said in the video for the band's electronic press kit for "Gates of Gold," easily found on YouTube.

Chris Morris' new book, "Los Lobos: Dream in Blue," breaks down the group's career virtually track by track, album by album, for those who desire an insider's guide.

Of course, Baca's big tent of friends includes more than

simply Los Lobos. But it's unlikely Lyle Lovett will be in the house tonight.

Lovett recorded with Los TexManiacs last week for an upcoming Smithsonian Folkways record. The musicians recorded Woody Guthrie's "Deportee," staying true to the spirit of the austere original.

The concept of the new re-

cord, the third with Smithsonian Folkways, is about border issues, cultural ties and immigration, "especially now with all this Trump thing," Baca said.

"We got a beautiful track with Lyle. He's such a nice guy, man. He's just a really down-to-earth cat," he said.

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