



Gallup musician to perform at El Morro Theatre

Antonio Reyna grew up on the north side of Gallup listening to mariachi. He spent Friday nights watching *El estrudio de Lola Beltrán* and his hero, for which the show was named. Beltrán, along with his mother, father, and grandma, helped Reyna realize his true passion in life: mariachi.

In an interview with the *Sun*, Reyna said music was something that was always encouraged in his house growing up.

“Saturdays were filled from the moment you got up to when we went to bed [with music],” Reyna said.

Reyna’s career began in 1996 when he was 22 years old after former *Action 7 News* anchor and mariachi vocalist Nelson Martinez discovered him. The duo toured together for several years before Reyna began his solo career in 2002.

Now, over 25 years since his career started, Reyna is still trying to preserve the sound he grew up with.

“When I started, I wanted to preserve that sound that I had fallen in love with, so a lot of my recordings are done in the old style and without a lot of modern arrangements,” Reyna explained.

As a mariachi vocalist, Reyna partners with many different mariachis. During his upcoming performance at El Morro Theatre, he will be partnering with Mariachi de Plata, a group from Western New Mexico University.

Reyna explained why he loves working with different mariachis.

“My favorite part of interacting and working on stage with mariachis is definitely the passion that the individual mariachis have for their instruments, and then they bring it all together to just create this wonderful presentation that I get to be a part of to tell the story,” Reyna said.

For those who may be unfamiliar with the mariachi genre, Reyna compares it to “an old country song.”

“I think mariachi is very much the ‘people’s music.’ It’s music of the people by the people,”

Reyna said. “It tells great stories of real people and real struggles. …”

During his performance, Reyna tells stories about his family and explains the connections he feels with each song. Many of the songs he plays are from the ‘50s and ‘60s.

Despite what he himself may feel about the songs, Reyna said he understands why some people shy away from mariachi.

“I understand that the language can be a barrier, but you’ve got to feel the music. There’s something very special and unique about mariachi,” Reyna said.

Reyna will be performing at El Morro Theatre April 30 at 2 pm with Mariachi de Plata. To learn more about him or to buy one of his seven albums, go to antonioreyna.com.

By Molly Ann Howell
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