

weekender

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music

Friday, November 30, 2007 11H

Mariachi: singer's passion

She'll open for top troupe at concert

BY RAMIRO BURR
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Mariachi music may not get the respect it deserves on commercial radio, but singer Azucena says it doesn't matter to her:

"The music is so beautiful, so elegant, so full of passion," she said in a recent interview. "It's the only music that gives me chills when I sing."



AZUCENA

Azucena will showcase her music and passions Saturday when she opens

for Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlán, considered the world's best mariachi troupe, at Municipal Auditorium as part of the 2007 Ford Motor Co. Mariachi Vargas Extravaganza.

Also performing Saturday will be Mariachi Los Galleros and the winners in the high school and university competition. The performances cap a weeklong series of events that includes a Mariachi Mass, an art exhibition, a serenata, workshops and more.

Azucena is no stranger to the extravaganza; she performed in the 1999 edition. Back then, she was touring behind her Sony Mexico CD debut, "La de Jalisco."

At present, she is in between



EXPRESS-NEWS FILE PHOTO

Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlán, considered the world's best mariachi troupe, performs at Municipal Auditorium during last year's event.

Mariachi Vargas Extravaganza

- **Featuring:** Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlán, Azucena, Mariachi Los Galleros, contest winners
- **Where:** Municipal Auditorium, 100 Auditorium Circle
- **When:** 7:30 p.m. Saturday
- **Tickets:** \$20-\$100 at Ticketmaster outlets

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Keyword: Entertainment
More on mariachi music and the Extravaganza performers

recording companies. However, she says she is about to sign up with a new record label and is preparing her new album.

"I'm really excited, and looking forward to producing this album. We've already started listening to songs and making selections," she said. "We want to follow the same

More events

- In addition to the Extravaganza:
- **Mariachi workshops:** 8 a.m. Friday, Convention Center
 - **Mariachi group competition:** 5 p.m. Friday, Municipal Auditorium
 - **Mariachi vocal competition:** 9 a.m. Saturday, Municipal Auditorium
 - **Mariachi Connection Jam:** 12:30 p.m. Saturday, Mariachi Connection, 2106 W. Commerce St.
- Note: Jam free and open to the public. Other events require advance registration

style, but also inject some new rhythms to make this new record distinct."

In an earlier interview, Azucena stressed that, unlike like other Mexican pop singers, who occasionally record a mariachi song or two, she considers herself a ranchera singer 100 percent.

"This music is what I grew up with, and there is nothing like it,"

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she said. "One reason why it has taken me so long to get my next album out is because some of the record labels offered me a contract, but they wanted me to sing banda or norteño music.

"That music is OK, but that is not me. It is a shame that radio stations do not play the music like they should. But rancheras and mariachi music is the music of México. It has love songs, sad songs, glorious songs. It is music to celebrate with, to relive and to remember."

San Antonio's Mariachi Los Galleros will be backing Azucena when she sings "Des Aires," "Los Laureles," "Tarde Aires de Mayab" and "Leña de Perul." In June, Los Galleros, led by Miguel Guzman, performed at the Plácido Domingo concert at the Alamodome.

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