



## Saucy deSol moves beyond traditional Latin rhythms

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The Asbury Park, N.J. group deSol features the same infectious, rousing sound and exciting mix of Latin rhythms and American pop and rock elements previously popularized by such bands as Azteca, Malo and the original Santana ensemble. But one difference between these earlier aggregations and deSol, who appears Saturday as part of Bridgestone Dancin' In The District, is this band's strong identification with Nashville, a city that's not as well known for its Latin connections as Miami, Los Angeles or New York. DeSol's Aug. 24 debut disc will be released on Curb Records, and the first single "Spin Around" is already getting airplay on both Spanish-language and Americana radio stations.

"We're thrilled to be on Curb Records, and we consider Nashville our second home," lead vocalist, guitarist and bandleader Albie Monterrosa said. "A lot of the guys on Curb, in addition to being a great country label, are also very much old rock and rollers. They see in our group something fresh and new, a chance to break something special, and they've been right behind us from the beginning."

The band is also managed by Oscar-winning songwriter Frankie Previtte and signed with the Progressive Global Agency. Things have been happening very fast for a group that's only been together 2 1/2 years. But in that time frame they've already attracted substantial attention from not only rock critics, but also from fans of jazz and Latin music as well. The line-up, besides Monterrosa, includes co-founder/percussionist Armando Cabrera, percussionist James Guerrero, guitarist/bassist Chris Guice, keyboardist Andy Letke, lead guitarist Rich Soto and drummer Ron Shields.

Monterrosa grew up in Queens, N.Y., while Cabrera, though born in Cuba, was raised in Puerto Rico. Monterrosa moved to New Jersey about 11 years ago, where he began playing various clubs and writing songs in a heavily rock vein. After meeting Cabrera, the two decided they wanted a band that could reflect their mutual interest in both American and Latin musical forms. Guerrero, whom Monterrosa had known since they were both children, became the group's third member, and they subsequently added others to fill out a seven-piece combo. Interestingly, Monterrosa shies away from comparisons to groups like Santana, even as he acknowledges his respect for their contributions.

"Everyone wants to categorize everything, especially the industry, so I understand why they compare us to Santana, at least what they did in the beginning, but we're doing something quite differently. Our rhythms, the lyrics, what we do are linked to the things we heard growing up in the '70s, and it is quite different from those other groups. We think that our sound can appeal to everyone from that era. We have the Latin base, but we're also rock guys, and that's what you hear in our music."

But like any band with international ties, deSol also must address the difficult question of linguistic integrity.

"We do about twenty-five to thirty percent of our songs in Spanish and the rest of them are in English," Monterrosa said. "This is really not that big a deal to us, but it is something that the industry as a whole always seems to be concerned about. We've done sets where we take some of the English songs and do them in Spanish, and there are others where we'll do some of the choruses or bridges in Spanish and the main melody and the hooks in English, and it never seems to bother the audiences."

However, questions of direction and content aside, deSol's music has a vibrant appeal and energy that ultimately obliterates all other issues. Fans who enjoy hearing fine music and/or dancing to arrangements featuring fiery, multiple beats and rhythms should savor the sounds of deSol.

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### Getting there

See deSol Saturday at Bridgestone Dancin' In the District, First Avenue and Broadway at Riverfront Park, along with Cypress Hill, Dropping Daylight and Common Ground. Tickets are \$5 in advance, \$8 day of the event. Gates open at 4 p.m. Call 255-3588 for information.

