

CONCERT PREVIEW

DeSoL spreads Latino groove

By Carolyn Lamberson

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Since deSoL was last in Eugene, opening for the Wailers at the McDonald Theatre back in March, the band's good "Karma" is paying off.

"Karma" is the first single off of the band's self-titled album on Curb Records. Last week, it was No. 6 on Radio and Records' Triple A (adult contemporary) national chart.

That puts this seven-piece band in some good company.

"Karma" was ahead of acts such as the Rolling Stones, Bruce Springsteen, the Dave Matthews Band and Sheryl Crow, and behind only Eric Clapton ("Revolution"), U2 ("City of Burning Light"), Ringside ("Tired of Being Sorry"), Coldplay ("Speed of Sound") and No. 1, Jack Johnson ("Good People").

"Radio's a big deal," said Albie Monterrosa, the band's lead singer. "It reaches so many people. We're seeing now that we're going to markets where we've never been before, where we're getting radio play, you get a fan base there.

"You go to other markets where you've never been before and you get no radio play, you get four people in the audi- ence."

Most likely there will be more than four people in the crowd on Saturday when deSoL returns to town for a show at John Henry's.

The members of deSoL have seen the spectrum in crowd sizes since banding together in 2000.

In addition to opening for the Wailers, the band opened for R.E.M. in Mexico City and played dates with Los Lonely Boys and Ozomatli. DeSoL also appeared at this year's Lollapalooza and Austin City Limits Music Festival, and at Bonnaroo in 2004.

"We've played in front of 15,000, we've played in front of 5,000, 6,000, 1,000, 200. So it's pretty cool. You don't know what you're going to get every night. But you turn it on all the same," Monterrosa said.

"It's a good learning experience all the same for any band to be on the road and be doing what we're doing and working every night on that stage. That's really where the professionals hone their craft, on the stage."

The band's membership of seven Latino musicians - Monterrosa refers to them as the brotherhood - has meant that deSoL often gets compared to acts such as Los Lonely Boys, Los Lobos and Santana. Monterrosa said those are legitimate comparisons, but only up to a certain point.

"It's legitimate because they're Latinos," he said. "Los Lonely Boys are Mexican guys, they're Latin American, first generation, like a lot of us here are, but they're a blues band. We go more for the Afro-Cuban thing, the world rhythms, with the pop essence, of course, so something like Carlos is closer in comparison.

"We totally respect all those groups, but I think that race alone is what brings us together - and also that we're doing it as a representation of our culture, our ancestry, in America, and spreading the way we look at life."

Asbury Park, N.J.-based deSoL - Monterrosa, percussionists Armando Cabrera and James Guerrero, guitarist Rich Soto, keyboard player Andy Letke, bassist Chris Guice and drummer George Saccal - is looking forward to their return trek to the Northwest, Monterrosa said.

"There's a lot of good energy out here, especially up by you guys." he said. "You cross a certain line in America, people's attitudes change. Everybody's a little more laid back. Everyone's really accepting and embracing.

"It's a little harder on the East Coast, which we love. That's where we're from. But it's beautiful to see the different people all around America, and that's what we're getting to experience."

Fans who saw deSoL's set in March got a taste of the band's live act. On Saturday, they can expect to hear some more.

"We're reaching to some the stuff that we haven't played in a while," Monterrosa said, "to get people moving and fill up some time and just jam out a little, you know, get a little loose.

"When you play for 45 minutes as an opening set, it's very regimented. Now we get to spread our wings."

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deSoL

With: Savannah

When: 7 p.m. Saturday

Where: John Henry's, 77 W. Broadway

How much: \$7