

Winter concert to feature Las Cafeteras

By Ceili Cornelius
Correspondent

American-Chicano band Las Cafeteras has taken the music scene by storm with infectious live performances and music that spans many borders and genres. Las Cafeteras will be returning to Sisters on Wednesday, January 15 in the first installment of the Sisters Folk Festival Winter Concert Series.

Born and raised east of the Los Angeles River, Las Cafeteras are mixing roots music and telling modern-day stories. Using traditional Son Jarocho instruments like the jarana, requinto, quijada (donkey jawbone) and tarima (a wooden platform), Las Cafeteras sing in English, Spanish, and Spanglish and add a remix of sounds, from rock to hip-hop to rancheras.

Co-founder of the band, Daniel French, spoke with *The Nugget* about the creation of the band and their mission to transport audiences through their music.

French plays the eight-string guitar called a janara, from Vera Cruz, Mexico. He also sings, raps and plays the keys. French grew up in the San Gabriel Valley in Southern California and from a young age was introduced to music. One day when he was at church, he began banging on a set of bongo drums for fun and someone walked by and saw him and asked him if he knew of anyone to play with the church band. He didn't, but the person who asked him actually wanted him to play. French hadn't ever played the drums or any instrument and didn't know what he was doing, but that was why the man who asked him wanted him — because he was so free and just doing it for fun.

"I then just started playing all the time and watching other people play, and I learned by doing it throughout my entire growing up," said French.

French has been playing keyboards, drums and guitar, and singing since middle school.

Las Cafeteras came together at a community center and café place in East L.A. There were community members playing day in and day out, playing a variety of genres of music. The other members that came together with French had also grown up playing Hispanic music, folklorico-style music and dance. Over time, French and the other band members began to make it more of an organized group.

“We were called cafeteras after those who play in the café in the community center for fun with no structure...”
— Daniel French

“We were called cafeteras after those who play in the café in the community center for fun with no structure, and we decided to take the feminine form of the word because at the time there were more women than men and it sounded better and people understood more what it meant,” said French.

The idea for the band was to play without the laws of language or gender and to bring the music of the Chicano, East L.A. and Hispanic neighborhoods to audiences around the world.

“There are a lot of ways to slice what the music we do is called and categorized as. It's folk music in the bigger sense of the word folk, it is music for the people and bringing



PHOTO PROVIDED

Las Cafeteras brings their mix of music genres to the Sisters stage next week.

the people together as one,” said French.

The music is a blend of sounds that come from the heritages of the whole band, incorporating things they learned growing up. For French, it is hard to put into words exactly what the band does on stage and what their genre of music is.

“It's more of an energy that we have, we strive to inspire people and energize the audience,” he said.

The band's energy and words of their music strive to inspire audiences to act and make a difference in the world. For French, the stage feels like a home away from home with them being on the road so many months out of the year.

“We are away from our home and families for five months at a time, so the stage is our home court, we try to create a space for everyone at our shows and break them out of being just spectators and

have them participate,” said French.

The band likes to get their audience up and dancing and be able to experience a oneness with their community.

Las Cafeteras have been together creating an infectious energy on stage for 10 years. They have toured all over the world together, traveling for half of the year. They are returning to Sisters after performing at The Belfry last year.

“We love Sisters and we are excited to meet everyone and see Oregon again,” said French.

The band is currently working on a new record, and they have put out a few singles off the record already this year.


Las Cafeteras will be performing as the first installment of Sisters Folk Festival's Winter Concert Series on January 15 at 7 p.m. in the Sisters High School Auditorium. Tickets are available for purchase for individual shows, or all three shows on the folk festival website: www.sistersfolkfestival.org. Call the office for more information at 541-549-4979.



Las CAFETERAS

January 15 at 7 p.m.
Sisters High School Auditorium


Tickets available for purchase at
www.sistersfolkfestival.org



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