

OLD WAYS, NEW SOUNDS

The music of **Edna Vazquez** can send shivers to your soul. When Vazquez performs, she closes her eyes and each of her facial muscles crinkles with concentration. She whistles and taps on her guitar's body with an intimate familiarity, and when she opens her mouth to sing or speak, it's a bellow straight from her heart.

"I want to share something with everyone," she says. "Whatever you do that is in a form to ease our hardcore journeys as humans, bring it out."

Vazquez has been playing guitar and composing songs about the human experience for 20 years, and her journey began in an all-male mariachi band. The group wasn't keen on her joining, but hot damn, could she play guitar. Her intricate strumming and soulful voice were enough to land her the gig, though she found herself being faced with sexism from yesteryear's traditional male-female roles — her ideas were often disregarded and she was punished by group members for "being a bitch."

Her former bandmates wouldn't book Vazquez for weeks on end as a result of her outspoken nature, but she took the time off as an opportunity to reinvent her art. "I would dream the music," Vazquez says, who explains that often she would wake up with songs in her head — songs that came to her as colors and stories.

"It's very subjective," she laughs.

Vazquez refers to her sound as an abstract genre, though at its core it is traditional Mexican folk with Cuban, Venezuelan and jazz influences. She sings in Spanish but says she believes that emotional frequencies trump possible language barriers.

When you watch Vazquez perform, it's like being in an art exhibit where you are the subject necessary to make the work come alive.

Vazquez's next performance is at the Día de Hispanidad celebration at 11 am Saturday, Sept. 17, at Capitol Rotunda in Salem, 900 Court Street N.E.
— *Kelsey Anne Rankin*



RETURN OF THE KING

After five years in Brooklyn, Eugene-born musician **Justin King** has come home. "All my oldest friends and family are here," King explains.

"It's really where my roots are," he continues. "Brooklyn was getting even more overrun and expensive and crazier and crazier. I wanted to come back and focus on my own music."

Since being back in town, King's band **King Radio** has released a four-song EP, *Adaline*, available now on SoundCloud.

King Radio is also about to embark on a Northwest

tour with L.A. band The Walcotts. King's drummer also moved from New York to the Eugene area, and the band's lineup is filled out with locally sourced musicians, whether that's around here or in King's frequent trips to play back East.

King calls King Radio's sound "country-soul or Pan-American music. I think it draws a lot of influence from Motown and Muscle Shoals but also some Nashville and Austin."

That sensuously gritty Nashville soul sound shows up in the horn arrangements from the *Adaline* EP-track of the same name. King's vulnerable falsetto is smooth and crackling at all the right moments over

a lazy, bluesy backbeat.

"It's a mix of influences, but they're all pretty rooted in American tradition," King says.

So how is he settling in now that he's back in Eugene? "It's really exciting to see Eugene growing up," King says, noting "the younger generation starting to exert its influence."

He continues: "It really kind of puts it into focus how lucky we are to live in this part of the Willamette Valley."

King Radio plays with **The Walcotts** 10 pm Thursday, Sept. 15, at Hi-Fi Lounge; \$5, 21-plus.
— *William Kennedy*