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Rana Santacruz to Present Solo CD in New York City at Joe's Pub

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Brooklyn-based Mexican songwriter Rana Santacruz debuts solo CD [Chicavasco](#) in New York City at Joe's Pub March 4th, 2010. He will also debut at Getty Museum in Los Angeles. CD mixes British and Celtic folk, American bluegrass and Mexican mariachi

Santacruz's solo debut [Chicavasco](#) - to be released March 9, 2010 -- is the product of a vibrant musical vision that was shaped by growing up in Mexico City and coming of age in a musical world informed by MTV, where all styles of music are accessible like never before.

Santacruz writes and sings the songs, as well as playing accordion and a variety of stringed instruments. To flesh out his tunes, he enlisted a cast of a dozen versatile musicians who add a folk and neo-classical flare with violin, cello, sax and jaw harp as well as traditional Mexican mariachi instruments like guitarrón, vihuela, trumpet and tuba

The instrumentation, richness of the sound, and delicate touch are reminiscent of Tucson's Calexico but with a softer edge and sharper focus. Often singing in a lilting falsetto, the melodies soar, imbued with the kind of passion found in Cuban son and Portuguese fado, while the music takes you not only north and south of the border, but across the Atlantic and back.

Born and raised in Mexico City, Santacruz had considerable success with his rock en español band La Catrina. Courted by a number of labels, the group signed with a major label in Mexico in the late '90s. His first experience with the music industry was a classic crash-and-burn, after recording in Mexico, Madrid and Miami, the CD failed to deliver a quick radio hit and his demoralized group soon disbanded.

In 2002, setting his sights well beyond the insular Mexican pop scene, Santacruz made the move from Mexico City to New York City. Living in Brooklyn and drawing on influences including the golden age of Mexican cinema, the magical realism novels of Gabriel Garcia Marquez, musicians like Tom Waits, the Smiths and the Pogues, and American bluegrass, Santacruz set about recording a collection of songs assimilating those disparate influences.

The resulting CD, [Chicavasco](#) -- named for a small town in the state of Hidalgo where La Catrina played a particularly surreal concert -- is beautifully conceived and artfully produced. Not surprising since Alex Venguer, who joined Santacruz in producing the disk, just took home a Grammy for "Best Traditional Folk Album" for his part in Loudon Wainwright's High Wide & Handsome: The Charlie Poole Project.

In its subtle, understated way, the CD's opening "Yo Se" (I Know) is quite different than anything you're likely to have heard: counterpoint between accordion and banjo sets the stage for Santacruz's vocals; midway through the song a fiddle picks up the banjo line. Although sung in Spanish, the melody brings to mind a Celtic sea shanty. Perhaps the most noteworthy aspect of this cross-cultural mélange is how organic and natural it sounds.

"Ojitos de Maguey" (Little Cactus Eyes) mixes lively Mexican jarocho rhythms with the rich textures of 21st Century folk while "Dejala Entrar" (Let Her In) conjures a neo-classical cabaret somewhere between Mexico and Vienna. Then there's the Tex-Mex, marching band (and tuba-driven) "Guajolote y Pavorreal" (The Turkey and the Peacock) and "El Ranchero Punk" (The Punk Rancher), an uptempo, rancho-bluegrass-old-time-polka-rap-yodel. Far from a trendy, genre mash-up, it's a spirited dance tune that, like the rest of the CD, manages to eclipse all its influences.

Like the classic Mexican songs of Chavela Vargas, Agustín Lara and José Alfredo Jiménez, Santacruz's lyrical descriptions of romance are equal parts love and tragedy, and delivered with passion and conviction. "Mexican culture is very complex, but in a lot of traditional art forms like old songs and films, you find very pure, sweet feelings," he said. "I tried to rescue this simplicity and bring my songs down to earth as much I can."

But if Santacruz's lyrical style is admittedly innocent, he approaches life using both sides of his brain. He earned a degree in the Music Business program at New York University, and hired on to work at Sony Music.

To date, Santacruz has won over American audiences of all stripes at showcases like Austin's South by Southwest and New York's Lincoln Center Out of Doors Festival. Santacruz's music is indeed music for a new America, if not a new world. And regardless of your Spanish language skills, you will understand every nuance of emotion in these grooves.

Buy the CD: [Chicavasco](#)

Tour Dates

Thurs March 4 New York, NY Joe's Pub - CD RELEASE PARTY
9:30pm
425 Lafayette St
\$12 advance / \$15 at door
212-539-8778
<http://www.joespub.com>

Wed March 24 Los Angeles, CA La Cita
Fri March 26 San Diego, CA Winston's
Sat March 27 Los Angeles, CA Getty Museum
Thurs April 29 Brooklyn, NY Barbes



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