

This past weekend I had the pleasure to meet four members of a band I became fond of after I got back from Los Angeles.



La Santa Cecilia. Photo by alBerto Trevino.



The band, [La Santa Cecilia](#), who is in fact that patron saint of musicians, made their way to Chicago's Green Dolphin for the Chicago World Music Festival. This was also the first time that I saw them perform a live show.

I met Gloria Estrada in LA at La Cita bar, which is also known for Mucho Wednesdays, one stage for the Visionary Sounds Music Festival and being one of the oldest locations to drink a beer, dating back to some time in the 1800s.

We chatted there, where she was a guest guitarist with [Uji & the Gringos](#) that night at [Mucho Wednesdays](#). Estrada learned how to play the guitar in high school after choosing it for an elective. Her grandfather and uncle were musicians as well but didn't have a direct impact on her. After learning, teaching herself and even getting a degree in music, this girl can rock the stage. In LA she invited me to check out the band at Bordello's but I didn't have time to hit it up.

After listening to the CD, putting it on my iPod and passing it off to my parents, I knew I had to see them. While in New York, I bumped into Rick Morales of [RatioNation](#) (even though he's based in Chicago and I see him here all the time) where he told me that he was going to bring the band to Chicago in September! I was excited.

At [Cafe](#), we supported the band from Chicago and promoted the show they played at the Dolphin. When I went up to say hello to Marisoul, the lead singer with an amazing voice and onstage personality, she already knew who I was. I felt so special! Marisoul grew up at Placita Olvera, to say the least. Her father has a stand there and that's where she started singing.

They brought along their bassist Alex and percussionist, Miguel. The other two guys couldn't make it so they had some substitutes, friends from LA on the accordion and drums.

When I saw them perform, the pride and joy were clearly displayed through Marisoul's words and heartfelt singing. I teared up a few times, when the articulate performer expressed her love of her culture and heritage. The link, the common denominator was her parents' music. I completely understood. We grew up listening to our parents' music and loving it. She expressed so many times, on

stage, what I felt and how it felt.

Her unique personality shows through in her speech and even more her clothing, sporting skirts and Mary Janes she decorated herself, with a vintage Star Wars t-shirt and neon pink belt on stage. She's also sure to wear pins on her blouse, supporting either Placita Olvera or anything else she finds important.

Hanging out with them on Sunday was spectacular. My boyfriend and I got to show them around the entire city, driving down 26th Street through Little Village, passing Pilsen and showing them Wrigley Field. We ate at an organic place owned by a Mexican woman in Bridgeport called Nana's. You should check it out sometime. The food is delicious. We ended up doing a photo shoot with the band after taking them to shop at Ragstock on Belmont. To top off the evening, we ate Giordano's stuffed pizza, which I think left a real impact on them.

We learned a lot about the band from a musical standpoint and also from a personal standpoint. In the end, I truly felt like I had made new friends and family members. It made me feel close to LA, thinking that we really aren't that far apart after all— at least not in spirit. They talked about coming out to Chicago for a month, to gig and learn and travel. We talked about going back to LA to live and learn and travel. The thought really does make me happy, especially knowing that I know people out there who will lend a helping hand.

This past year truly was one for LA. I've met amazing people who I still talk to, found awesome music that now infiltrates my ears whenever I get a chance, learned about new locations and cultural expressions and most importantly, made friendships. La Santa Cecilia really did touch my life this year. She united me with others through the love and exploration of music.

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