

# BIOS

## About Maria the Mexican

Maria the Mexican began May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2011 in Chicago when vocalists Maria and Teresa Cuevas hired blues/funk musician Garrett Nordstrom to play Mariachi guitar. Having been lifelong musicians from the Midwest, Nordstrom and the Cuevas Sisters paired up with guitarist Jason Riley to form Maria the Mexican, an Americana Soul/Mexicana Groove band with strong guitars and smooth vocals.



Maria the Mexican is a *mezcla* of traditional Mariachi roots and contemporary blues-rock delivered in English and Spanish. It is a true hybrid of Mexican folklore and rock-n-roll. Their debut album, *Moon Colored Jade*, drops in October of 2013.

## Maria Cuevas – vocals/guitar



Maria is a classically trained guitarist, pianist, and vocalist. She began her career as a musician at the age of 11 playing the guitar and *vihuela* while singing in her grandmother's mariachi band *Mariachi Estrella*.

Maria is the granddaughter of celebrated Mariachi pioneer Teresa Cuevas. Maria's passion, commitment and skills have placed her among the country's leading up-and-coming Latina performing artists.

Don't let her blonde locks fool you, while Maria is half Irish, her Latin roots run strong. She graduated from the University of Kansas with a BA in Communication Studies and a minor in Latin American Studies. Maria's undergraduate years included Spanish language studies at the University of Menendaz Pelayo in Barcelona, Spain and the University of Guadalajara at Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. Maria has also served as an ESL instructor.

**Tess Cuevas – vocals/violin**



Named after her grandmother, Teresa (Tess) Cuevas is the brunette beauty behind Maria the Mexican. Her soulful violin riffs and seductive voice ring out with emotion on the album. Tess is a classically trained violinist and vocalist. She also began her career as a musician at the age of 11 playing the violin and singing in her grandmother's mariachi band *Mariachi Estrella*. Today the traditional mariachi tones still ring out in the Americana/Mexicana *mezcla* of Maria the Mexican, and Teresa's Mexican roots emanate while performing.

Tess graduated from the University of Kansas with a BA in

Communication Studies with a minor in Latin American studies. Following the completion of her degree she traveled to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico where she lived for six months to practice Spanish. Following a three-year stay in Chicago, she relocated to Kansas City to form Maria the Mexican.



**D. Garrett Nordstrom – guitar/songwriter**

D. Garrett Nordstrom joined Maria the Mexican as a guitarist on *Cinco de Mayo* of 2011 when the Cuevas Sisters hired him to play mariachi guitar in a Chicago nightclub. As a veteran of the Midwest club scene, Nordstrom was fronting the Kansas City based Alt-R&B group *The Garrett Nordstrom Situation* and had released three full length records on his own label, Birdsway Records.

As soon as Nordstrom returned to Kansas City, he began assembling the band around the talents of the Cuevas Sisters and rehearsals began. Within months, Maria the Mexican's first single entitled, "Ruler" was released on You Tube. Nordstrom co-wrote

"Ruler" with Maria Cuevas while playing guitar, synths and Hammond B3 on the track.

Nordstrom and Maria Cuevas quickly put all their energies into writing and arranging material for what was to become Maria the Mexican's debut album. After writing or co-writing nine of the songs for the record, Nordstrom produced *Moon Colored Jade* with Matthew Russo and serves as the group's rhythm guitarist.

Nordstrom resides in Kansas City, MO.

### **Jason Riley - guitar**



Jason Riley began his life with Maria the Mexican (MTM) when he was called into a recording session by Garrett Nordstrom for MTM's first single, "*Ruler*." Riley and Nordstrom met while attending Missouri Western State University and had wanted to work together for several years. Riley added classical nylon string and lead guitar to the track and agreed to join the group after hearing the mix of the track. Riley would be on stage with the group for their first live performance.

Riley is an eclectic musician and guitar virtuoso heavily influenced by Jimi Hendrix, David Gilmour, Django Reinhardt, Joe Pass and Andres Segovia. Riley wrote the Spanish-style guitar piece, *El Amor Tuyo* and co-wrote *Rock and Sway* for *Moon Colored Jade*. He is the guitar sound of Maria the Mexican's *Moon Colored Jade* and brings a rare contemporary improvisational flare to the group's live performance.

### **More Information**

Access [www.mariathemexican.com](http://www.mariathemexican.com) for performance dates, sample tracks and updated info on the band.