

Jaguares seek harder edge on '45'



Mexican rock band **Jaguares** went for a harder rock edge on their latest CD “45,” said guitarist/singer/songwriter **Saul Hernandez.**

“This album is more concrete and more direct

in sound and concept than our previous,” Hernandez said in a recent interview. “It is not an eclectic record nor did we experiment as much as we usually do in previous albums.”



Longtime followers of Los Jaguares and Hernandez know the group is well known for blending their rock guitars with psychedelic rhythms and abstract lyrics.

But on their latest CD, the sound definitely leans toward a rock metal edge. The first single

“Alquimista,” features guitars blazing over dense percussions, while Hernandez sings about stepping out from “a life lived inside a glass jar.”

Los Jaguares are on a new U.S. tour to promote their “45” CD. The “Gira 45” tour will include stops in Salt Lake City, Seattle, Portland, Baltimore, Atlanta and Miami in February and March. For complete tour dates visit www.jaguaresmx.com .

Formed originally in 1985 as **Los Caifanes**, the group changed their name to Jaguares in 1996. Among their main influences the group cites artists as varied as Don Was, Rolling Stones, David Hidalgo, Morrissey, Stuart Copeland, Billy Preston, Flaco Jiménez, Tigres del Norte, and Juan Gabriel.

On “45,” the group largely concentrates on intense rock/metal tunes such as the furious “Lobo” and the brisk “Entre tus Jardines” but they balance things with thoughtful ballads like “A Traves de La Pared” and “Si Fuera Necesario.”

In the age of rapidly expanding social networks, more groups are using the Internet to offer free songs so fans can get a taste of the group’s sound. Hernandez says online marketing is just as important as traditional touring and promotions.

“As an example, the single has been very successful,” said Hernandez. “Within the first week we had it on our web page, we have four million plays.”

That sort of promotion not only provides valuable exposure but critical buzz.

Yet Hernandez says he prefers making contact with fans the old-fashioned way, from the stage.

“Any promotion is good, it is important and necessary but I also believe that you have to perform in front of people. Getting promoted on the Internet is good but if they (fans) can see you perform on stage, then it is even better.”

Los Jaguares are also holding out hope for a Grammy. The group was recently nominated for the best rock/alternative album category. The 2009 Grammys are scheduled Feb. 9 in Los Angeles. It is the band's third nomination but they have yet to win.

"`45' is definitely one of our best albums and it would be a distinct honor, if we were to win one," Hernandez said. "But we will see what happens."

The CD "45" has earned gold record status (sales of more than 100,000) in Mexico. The CD was recorded in Los Angeles and Mexico City by Hernández, drummer Alfonso André and record producer Howard Willing. The rest of the band is guitarist César López and bassist Marco Renteria.