



*(La Mafia is one of the longest running Tejano bands in the Southwest. Our correspondent **Ra** **mon Hernandez***

reports on the group's anniversary show in advance of their big show.)

La Mafia 30th Anniversary is just around the corner and they have chosen the Alamo City as the site for their big shebang on Sunday, May 23.

When asked, "Why not Houston?" by a few journalists during their recent press conference at the Alamodome, Óscar De La Rosa answered, "While Houston is our hometown, it is not the same as here and we don't get 100 percent media

support as here and in other cities; and San Antonio seems to have the complete package, namely the strongest Tejano station in existence. Houston unfortunately does not have a Tejano station. So San Antonio is the perfect place for this and the support has been here since the beginning. Furthermore, San Antonio also has the "number one" Mexican station too."

In the early 1980s, De La Rosa had his own group, his brother A. Leonard Gonzales fronted his own band, and Armando "Mando" Lichtenberger Jr. and Israel "Speedy" Villanueva were Los Tremendos Luceritos de Mando y Speedy.

Then they merged as Los Mirasoles and release "El Piojito," their first 45 rpm single.

"Thirty years ago, I was a kid running around the streets of Houston," Óscar reminisced. "I was the youngest in a family of nine. We lost our father at a young age, but my dad owned a bar and I would clean up the floor as I listened to la música Mexicana."

His brothers then exposed him to la onda Chicana and pop; and he honed his skills with his first group at weddings, low rider show and quinceñeras.

After they became La Mafia, the young achievers were signed up by Tony Rodríguez, who from 1980 to 1982 released five 33 1/3 rpm long-play albums on Disco Diana. By the end of 1982, they had come to the attention of Luis Silva and Bob Grever released their first Manny Guerra engineered album on CARA Records; and they were on their way.

So yes, the dynamite duo of Oscar and Mando has been around 30 years. We won't reveal their ages other than to state that they are under the "Big 50." During that time span, they have become known for their ballads, cumbias and international repertoire all over North, Central and South America plus Puerto Rico, where they recently met with Marc Anthony for an upcoming

project.

Therefore their list of advertised invited guests, which include Cristian Castro, Frankie J plus some surprise guests, go beyond Tejano. Other guest artists are Little Joe, Bobby Pulido, Los Palominos, Shelly Lares and Elida Reyna.

Óscar and Mando mentioned that they are talking to Leonard and Speedy because the doors are open to all former La Mafia musicians to participate in this once-in-a-lifetime concert. In addition, the concert will be recorded for future release as a compact disc.

When asked what advice they would give up-and-coming new bands, Mando responded, "Let people know you for your own sello (trademark style). So do this by daring to dream and do something different. That is very important if you want to make your own mark."

Tickets, which start at \$25 are still available at all Ticketmaster locations.

For more information check out www.lamafia.com,

www.facebook.com/pages/La-Mafia/48651837133 or www.myspace.com/lamafia.