

CUMBIA COOL

MUSICAL DUO OCHO OJOS BRINGS LATIN GROOVES TO THEIR HOMETOWN OF COACHELLA AND BEYOND.

CESAR FLORES & DANNY LLOYD TORRES

HOW DID YOU GUYS MEET?

DANNY: We had a mutual friend who volunteered at Raices [Cultura] for some other events, so she recommended to us, “Hey, you guys should come by and volunteer as well.” So, that’s what we started doing. ... We already knew that we were musicians so then we just hooked up that way, like “Hey, let’s jam out one day.” **CESAR:** Our friend was organizing this event. She had asked me to play because she knew that I was doing this cumbia thing at the time, and that’s where I met Danny. We agreed we should perform for that event. It was a cumbia boogie night. It basically became the Ocho Ojos debut.

WHAT’S THE STORY BEHIND YOUR BAND NAME?

DANNY: When they were making the flyer, they were like, “Well, what do you guys want to put? Do you just want to put your names? Or do you want to think of a name?” ... We thought of it in maybe 10 minutes because were just throwing back ideas. I think first Cesar was saying ‘something something Collective.’ And then I was like, “Well there’s two of us, we both have glasses.” I was like, “Two and two, or something like that.” And then one of the girls here from Raices was like, “Oh, your glasses! Eight eyes.” So then we were like: Ocho Ojos.

SO, WHAT BRAND ARE YOUR GLASSES?

DANNY: Ray-Ban.
CESAR: Mine are from this little room of a place [in Mexico] that you go to this eye doctor and they’re ready in an hour. You pay like 1,500 pesos, which is probably like \$70 right now. I’m gonna get some better glasses now that we are Ocho Ojos.

WHAT DO EACH OF YOU BRING TO THE BAND?

CESAR: Before Ocho Ojos, it was cumbia. But now that I jam with Danny, he definitely brings a more funky element. ... He always brings the funk and it just complements it really well. It sounds very spacey, more psychedelic.
DANNY: Before this, I was in a metal band and a rock band, so I’ve never necessarily played any genre of music that’s in the Latin sense or Latin style. Playing with Cesar, that’s the main thing that I get from him.

WHAT’S YOUR STYLE IN ONE WORD?

CESAR: *Rasquache.*
DANNY: Fun.

DOES YOUR STYLE CHANGE ON AND OFF STAGE?

CESAR: We don’t try to portray any message with what we wear. We try to be comfortable.
DANNY: When we first started playing, I was like, “Hey, how should we dress? Should we have a look?” ... We both agreed: polo or collared shirt, black slacks and a blazer here and there.

WHAT DO YOU BRING TO THE VALLEY MUSIC SCENE?

DANNY: Bottom line: cumbia.
CESAR: Small kids listen to it like, “Oh, ok cool.” Older folks that grew up listening to this music love it when we play at community events or when we play at shows. Our friends that are within our age group, they’re dancing. It’s very universal. 🌵 —Kristin Scharkey



On Cesar (left): Perry Ellis shirt, Arizona jeans, García Hermanos huaraches, vintage hat, Fender Telecaster guitar. On Danny (right): H&M shirt, vintage sarape, RSQ pants, Vangelo shoes, güira. Photograph by Ashley LaPrade. Location: Coachella