

For Immediate Release

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**Vocalist Marina Crouse Celebrates her Chicana Heritage
with New Tribute Album to Eydie Gormé
Set for Release on Little Village Foundation in June 2022**

Canto de mi corazón

*Little Village Releases Lauded Vocalist Marina Crouse's Homage to the Boleros and Rancheras of the 1930s – 1960s,
the Soundtrack to Crouse's Upbringing in California.*

El Cerrito, Calif. – Monday, March 28, 2022 – Accepting one's identity and ethnicity, and in turn, that of others is becoming more embedded in the cultural fabric of our current times. In decades past, though, no clear path was laid to feel welcome and find your place in the United States (as well as within your own family) as a person of color. As BIPOC communities face polarization and the inconceivable challenges of racism, it becomes one of life's great achievements to authentically feel at home within your own skin. **Marina Crouse** is a 4th generation Chicana whose parents and grandparents were all born in the United States, yet she has spent her entire life contending with her Mexican-American heritage. On her first all-Spanish recording, ***Canto de mi corazón* (Little Village Foundation; Release Date: June 2, 2022)**, the powerhouse vocalist pays tribute to one of her childhood musical influences, **Eydie Gormé**.

Marina Crouse had a transient upbringing with her single mother moving the family to different cities every year. Crouse would be repeatedly tasked with starting at a new school, making new friends, and attempting to create a sense of home. Crouse's grandmother's house in Los Angeles was the one place that always felt like home. In her living room, a big stereo (that looked like a giant dresser) had a turntable to play records and it was there that Crouse became enamored with the romantic Boleros and Rancheras of the 1930s – 1960s. Although Crouse didn't speak Spanish (yet) or understand the lyrics per se, she would still sing along word for word in Spanish.

Canto de mi corazón transports Crouse back to her grandmother's home where she would spin **Eydie Gormé y Trio Los Panchos, Linda Ronstadt, Vikki Carr** records, among others on her turntable at backyard BBQs and on Christmas. Crouse remembers Gormé as being, "unapologetic, and unafraid to embrace her heritage."

Gormé was born in the Bronx to Sephardic Jewish parents who spoke several languages, including Ladino (Judeo-Spanish). Gormé was able to speak and sing in Spanish with incredible success. Crouse was inspired with how Gormé moved between English and Spanish in her work. Watching Gormé and other famous Mexican film stars from the 1940's, 50's and 60's such as **Pedro Infante**, **Jorge Negrete**, and **Vicente Fernandez** left a lasting impression on Crouse. Gormé's original composition "Más Amor," the only Spanish song co-written with her husband **Steve Lawrence**, became a favorite and it opens Crouse's new album, *Canto de mi corazón*.

"Eydie Gormé and the music of this era connects me to my heritage like nothing else," says **Marina Crouse**. "I grew up with people expecting me to know how to speak Spanish based on the way I looked, and I always found it so humiliating to admit that my family never taught me to speak Spanish when people would ask me 'what kind of Mexican are you if you can't speak Spanish?' Being able to sing and share this music makes me feel extremely proud of my heritage and gives me a deep sense of belonging."

Since her early 20's, Crouse slowly began learning Spanish and eventually became a professor of Spanish Language and Literature at **Diablo Valley College**, after graduating from the **University of California, Berkeley**. Crouse has truly come full circle and is deeply proud of her Chicana identity. She says, "Growing up, I was somewhat removed from Mexican culture, in part because my parents weren't recent immigrants. And while at times I felt lost and struggled to fit in with the two sides of my cultural identity, learning to speak Spanish granted me entrance to a whole world of new possibilities and connections."

On *Canto de mi corazón*, Crouse selects a collection of songs reflecting deep traditional romances with rich melodies. Gormé performed many of the songs that appear on *Canto de mi corazón*, such as "Más amor" (by **Gormé and Lawrence**), "Cuando vuelva a tu lado" (by **María Grever**), "La última noche" (by **Robert "Bobby" Collazo**), "Piel canela" (by **Félix Manuel "Bobby" Rodríguez Capó**), "Historia de un amor" (by **Carlos Eleta Almarán**), and "La media vuelta" (by **José Alfredo Jiménez**). Other songs include "Somos novios" (by **Armando Manzanero**), "Sálvame" (by **José H. Valerdi**), "Amor mío" (by **Álvaro Carillo**), and the folksong, "La llorona."

Crouse comments, "Never in my wildest dreams would I have thought I'd be releasing an all-Spanish album. It is a dream come true and I am so proud to be able to share it with the public and with my children. It was important to have a special group of musicians on the album to go on this journey with me and I am so excited about the music we made together; we really captured the spirit of the music."

Crouse performs with national TV star percussionist/vocalist **Vicki Randle** (*The Tonight Show*), bassist **Ruth Davies** (**Ramblin' Jack Elliot, Elvin Bishop, Sammy Hagar**), and guitarist **Danny Caron** (**Bonnie Raitt, Van Morrison**). **Kid Anderson** co-produces and engineers *Canto de mi corazón* out of his San Jose-based **Greaseland Studios**.

Jim Pugh and Little Village Foundation will present an album release concert for *Canto de mi corazón* at **The Freight & Salvage** (Berkeley, Calif.) on Thursday, June 2, 2022 ([LINK](#)).

For more information regarding Marina Crouse and *Canto de mi corazón*, please visit: marinacrouse.com

About Little Village Foundation

Little Village Foundation is a non-profit cultural producer and record label that searches out, discovers, records and produces music that otherwise would not be heard beyond the artist's family and community. Little Village supports the dreams of artists from non-traditional backgrounds. Many of these artists make music just as a part of telling their community stories. Through some detective work and the help of an extensive network from his acclaimed performing career, Executive Director Jim Pugh learns of great music happening in communities throughout the country, music that has deep roots in American popular and roots traditions. He then offers to record their music at no expense to the artist at all. Usually, this is the very first time the artist has been recorded. Not only is there no expense to the artist, Little Village Foundation owns zero intellectual property for the music and sets up all retail accounts for the sales of CDs in the artists' names. This happens with generous public donations and grants.

For more information on Little Village Foundation, please visit: littlevillagefoundation.com

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