

Veteran songwriter's record may climb on charts

By CATHIE BREIDENBACH

Jose Riojas of Southfield is more than a singer of other people's songs. For nearly 20 years he's been writing and arranging his own material, playing guitar and base, and performing in the Detroit area.

Now he's recorded a love song, "Oh Lovely Lady," which Cashbox magazine picked as the record of the month to watch.

Cashbox not only interprets music trends, but has the power and prestige

to shape them. When Cashbox says a record is good, disc jockeys around the country set their turntables spinning to play that song on the air.

That's what's happening to Jose's mellow, country love song. Jose and his manager, Bob Harris, hope that "Oh Lovely Lady" from the soon-to-be-released album "A Brighter Side of Blue" will rise to the top of the charts.

When Jose was 18 and new in the business, he took his first songs to MGM Records in New York.

"The songs are good," he was told,

"but we can't record them with you as the artist." Jose was talented but an unknown from Southfield who wanted to record his own songs. Because record companies don't make money with inexperienced performers, Jose came home to Detroit to learn more about the entertainment business.

Now he's a seasoned performer. For nearly 20 years he's been a song writer and entertainer. The Red Cedars Restaurant in Southfield is his home base and he plans to return there in the new year.

Around the Detroit area he's played the Playboy Club, the Roostertail, the Holiday Inn, the Raleigh House, and done concerts in Kennedy Square.

In his act he does a variety of music including Kenny Rogers country songs, Neil Diamond hits, his own material and a guitar solo of the soulful Malaguena. He toured with the Grand Ole Opry and performed in the Middle East with the Goodwill Ambassadors for the U.S.

LIKE BARRY MANILOW and other

aspiring artists, Jose wrote advertising jingles. He advertised Fords, Dodges and a 6,000-acre ranch. The jingles brought him cash and recognition. Years in the business have taught him that exposure is the only road that leads to the big time.

He hopes that "Oh Lovely Lady" will be noticed by major record companies and major artists, and that Detroit disc jockeys will give air time to this graceful love song written and sung by a hometown entertainer.

"I sound like a frog when I sing," Jose says when he describes his pleasant real-person baritone. A bit of gravel in his voice and a seasoned warmth in his brown eyes give Jose credibility. Kenny Rogers, Neil Diamond and Kris Kristofferson know that a voice with rough warmth sells records.

Country music is big now and "Oh Lovely Lady," recorded in Nashville with steel guitar backup, has a soft country sound. The voice is right. The sound is right, and the lyrics of Jose Riojas love song are strong. No wonder Cashbox is betting that "Oh Lovely Lady" will move.



Jose Riojas' song, "Oh Lovely Lady," was picked as record of the month by Cashbox magazine. (Staff photo by Mindy Saunders)

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