For **MARIA THE MEXICAN** principal **Maria Elena Cuevas** it’s not about her…then again, it is.  The band is actually named for Maria and sister **Teresa (Tess) Cuevas**’ grandmother, Maria Teresa Alonzo Cuevas, a pioneer in Mariachi who in the 70s founded Mariachi Estrella, one of the first all-female Mariachi bands in the US. The band eventually performed for more than 30 years but tragedy struck Mariachi Estrella in 1981 when seven members were killed in the Hyatt Skywalk collapse in Kansas City.  Following the accident and grandmother Maria’s recovery the band resumed performing and in the late 90s granddaughters Maria and Tess, who learned Mariachi and other traditional Mexican music from their grandmother, performed with her in Mariachi Estrella as youngsters  – Maria singing and playing guitar and vihuela, Tess singing and playing violin.   Perhaps the most important musical legacy of Mariachi Estrella’s final years after the Hyatt tragedy was the indelible imprint placed on the Cuevas sisters by the experience of performing traditional Mexican music with their grandmother.

*“My grandmother taught a lot of*

*people about this music – other family members, university students, certainly my sister and myself, but there is a whole universe of people who were so generously and positively influenced by her.”*

*-MARIA CUEVAS*

Now for the *“then again, it is”* part. Today **Maria Cuevas** is lead vocalist and guitarist playing acoustic, electric and traditional Mexican stringed instruments for **MARIA THE MEXICAN** - a Mexicana/Americana/indie blues rock/funk/soul fusion - a true hybrid of Mexican folklore and rock ’n roll delivered in both English and Spanish. Founded by Maria, sister Tess (vocals and violin) and guitarist / songwriter **D. Garrett Nordstrom** (a veteran of the KC/Midwest club scene with 3 releases by the alt-R&B group *The Garrett Nordstrom Situation*) **MTM** is at work on a new release to follow up *“Moon Colored Jade”* (2013) and *“South of the Border Moonlight”* (2016) with plans to tour after the new album’s projected Fall 2018 street date.

On stage there is an amalgam of traditional Mexican and American rock instrumentation – drums, bass, electric guitars, acoustic guitars, traditional Mexican stringed instruments, pedal steel guitar, congas and percussion, trumpet, keyboards.  And a passionate delivery of American roots music forms dosed with traditional Mexican harmonic and rhythmic influences alongside traditional Mexican music – Mariachi, Cumbia and more.  The repertoire comes to life with original music – from incendiary love songs to social and political commentary – written and arranged in collaborations between Maria and Garrett Nordstrom and penned in both English and Spanish.