

# Festiva

## The Last Dance



Las Leyendas set to headline  
La Villa Real before doors close



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In the early days of Tejano music, even before some artists became household names, the music spoke for itself.

For many fans, songs like, "Vestida de Blanco," or "Reina de Mi Amor" spark memories of a long lost love, a first dance or a time when Tejano music was pure and unadulterated.

Back then it was, "Put Me in Jail," or "Tres Ramitas," that could bring a crowd to the center of the dance floor.

In the past 30-plus years Freddie Martinez, Agustin Ramirez, Carlos Guzman and Sunny Ozuna, now known as Las Leyendas, created a genre of music all four still swear by today.

Within their own careers they have earned their stripes as performers from gig to gig, traveling modestly, sometimes not being able to travel at all.

Together their careers total more than 100 years in entertainment, and in the Rio Grande Valley Las Leyendas are also known as *las raices*, the roots of Tejano music.

"I think we are all at an interesting point in our lives," said Guzman about sharing the stage with Las Leyendas. "We were all pals, even in competition."

Las Leyendas will perform a "Last Dance" on Saturday at La Villa Real Special Events Center, before the venue closes its doors for good. After 30 years in the promotion and entertainment business, owner Nano Ramirez announced earlier this month the Villa Real had been sold.

"The Valley is a very special area of the U.S.A.," said Guzman, a Mission native. "I get chills just thinking about the performance."

Formed about seven years ago as the brainchild of Freddie Martinez, Las Leyendas wasted no time before hitting the studio. All were "old school," which brought the four even closer together.

Their first release, *Leyendas y Raices*, (Freddie Records) was a smash and met with tremendous praise from fans.

Even in the midst of a seemingly dying genre, the album earned a Grammy nomination.

Though the legends didn't take home a golden phonograph that year, in 2001 they picked up Best Tejano Album for *Que Es Musica Tejana* during the 43rd Annual Grammy Awards.

"We all worked it back in the day," said legendary

crossover artist Sunny Ozuna, of the Sunny & the Sunliners fame. "We have really come such a long way, we are all survivors."

Nano Ramirez calls each of Las Leyendas the foundation of La Villa Real and the reason behind his early success. When he thinks of Ozuna, he can't help but think of his days at Mission High School in the early 1960s. At the time "Talk to Me," was huge on the radio.

In 1963, Ozuna appeared on Dick Clark's *American Bandstand*, the first Tejano performer to mark such a feat, and continued to gain fans across the states. When Nano Ramirez first began hosting Tejano dances, back when he charged 50 cents at the door, it was Agustin, Freddie, Carlos and Sunny who would fill the venue to capacity.

"Who would think they would be performing for me," Nano Ramirez joked. "I think it's appropriate for (Las Leyendas) to close out the venue."

The legendary Agustin Ramirez says the performance, although bittersweet, is a way for the four of them to give something back to the community that welcomed them with open arms.

"La Villa Real will live forever as far as I'm concerned," said the Austin-based musician. "It has been part of our culture, but life goes on, as long as we remember the good things about it and how blessed we have been."

"It's amazing how we've wound up together again and keeping our music alive."

Miriam Ramirez covers features and entertainment for *The Monitor*. You can reach her at (956) 683-4468. For this and other local stories, visit [www.themonitor.com](http://www.themonitor.com).

CARLOS  
Guzman



"We have really come such a long way, we are all survivors."

—Sunny Ozuna



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**FREDDIE  
Martinez**

**AGUSTIN  
Ramirez**

**SUNNY  
Ozuna**



**WHAT:** "The Last Dance" w/Las Leyendas-Carlos Guzman,  
Freddie Martinez, Sunny Ozuna & Agustin Ramirez  
**WITH SPECIAL GUESTS:** Mario Montes, Grupo Sierra and a  
special appearance by Country Roland  
**WHERE:** La Villa Real Special Events Center

1201 S. Bentsen Road, McAllen  
**WHEN:** Saturday, July 29, 2006  
**COST:** \$20, reserved, \$15 G.A.  
**FOR MORE INFO:** Call (956) 687-7121 or  
visit [www.rgvtickets.com](http://www.rgvtickets.com)