



Celebrated native son, lanky Alex Maryol, at 26, enjoys region-wide popularity as a rocker and blues man. With that and his foodie-family background, the soulful singer, by Santa Fe standards, has got every finger that's not plucking a guitar string plugged into our town's preeminent cultural sockets.

The self-effacing local success story, who draws crowds with his accomplished guitar riffs, songwriting skill, sincere smile, and long golden locks, actually thought I wanted to interview him about his family's lauded restaurants, which include Tia Sophia's, Tomasita's, Diego's, and at one time Route 66's Central Cafe, owned for decades by his Greek-immigrant grandmother. Currently pursuing a degree in Contemporary Music at the College of Santa Fe, ("Why go anywhere else?") while also enjoying notoriety as a local performer, Santa Fe-born-and-raised Maryol has made his soulful sound near legend in the City Different.

With regular gigs at the south side's Blue Corn Cafe—known as perhaps the best tipping gig in Santa Fe—as well as at Willee's Blues Club and numerous other venues around town, The Alex Maryol Band—with bassist Willy Magee and drummer John Curtis—has been in demand ever since its debut six years ago at the Cowgirl Hall of Fame. Maryol began with a ukulele at the age of three, moved on to the piano, which he hated, then got his first guitar at seven. That was also the year he began his album collection, with Stevie Ray Vaughn's "The Sky is Crying."

"My cousin George gave it [the album] to me."

"Where is cousin George now?"

"Oh, he lives right over there, actually."

With the élan of one deeply in his element, Maryol casually waves his hand toward the neighborhood surrounding The Downtown Subscription, where we chat over cups of tea, then squints through the French doors glass panes and points more specifically. "Right through there, actually." He seems to want me to follow his finger up the street, around the corner, and past familiar landmarks, willing a vision of cousin George's well-loved dwelling directly into my mind.

Known for an indefatigable, single-minded dedication to his craft, Maryol says playing music is no more nor less than a basic part of who he is: "The bulk of my career has been all writing my own stuff. Lately I've been trying to hone my writing skills as best as I can, because I realize...this is just what I do. It's not anything great. It's like: you write, my dad makes food, my brother makes food. Everyone's got their thing. It's just I write and I perform."

His easy breezy confidence in his own uncomplicated identity—a Santa Fean and a musician—might be a bit on the safe side for an artist whose musical style is traditionally about lost, out-of-your-element, self-destructive, low-down, blue moments of absolute self-loathing...but give him time for the grit. An uncertain future sure to be fraught with the innumerable pitfalls of trying to make it in the music business holds all the despair and angst one man really needs.

His soul-tinged blues-rock has opened doors for Maryol within Santa Fe and to some extent throughout Colorado's resort towns as well as Memphis and Salt Lake City, but the songwriter insists that the music he makes now isn't really his sound. Not yet. His current style, which has already won him extensive critical acclaim, is just a jumping off place for the third-year college student who counts among his influences Chuck Berry, Johnny Rivers, Fats Domino, Elvis, Mozart, and Jimi Hendrix.

Recalls Maryol, "Chuck Berry made me want to play guitar. My dad used to play these artists [Berry, Rivers and Domino] on the radio driving me to kindergarten. I was like: I want to do that! I don't know what it is, but I want to do that! The style that I play now is...how do I describe it? If you think of a band like the Beatles or the Rolling Stones they all started off playing the blues, you know. And eventually, over time, they started developing their own sound, which—a lot of people say they're all just rock and roll—but...you could compare the Beatles and the Stones and U2 and Aerosmith but really they all have their own unique sound and they all started off pretty much playing the blues.

That's kind of what I'm trying to do. I started off playing the blues, just straight out blues, and now I'm at this point where I love the blues, I'm