

Taqueria San Jose: authentic Mexican cuisine

By **Ryan Kamphuis**
A&E EDITOR

It's well known that for every good Mexican restaurant, there are dozens of bad ones. Luckily one of the good ones, Taqueria San Jose, is mere minutes away from IIT. Located just north of the intersection of 33rd and Halsted at 3253 S Halsted, Taqueria San Jose is easily reached by taking the 35 bus west to Halsted, then walking north to the restaurant. The restaurant is open from 11 AM to 11 PM on weekdays and until 2 AM on weekends.

Taqueria San Jose serves up authentic Mexican affair that is both delicious and affordable. One of the best parts of the restaurant is that, unlike many late-night Mexican places,

Taqueria San Jose's food is not very greasy. The menu is quite extensive, offering standard Mexican such as burritos and nachos, and more unique dishes like steak torta, tostadas, and cebollitas. I would like to personally recommend the queso with chorizo and the carne asada suizo burrito. The cheese used in the queso pairs really well with the spicy chorizo, and the carne asada steak in the burrito is seasoned really well.

Before you order the restaurant gives you chips and salsa and some tubs of pickled vegetables to much on. Make sure to try the pickled vegetables – they are to die for! Also ask if you could have some guacamole with the chips. They make their guacamole fresh every day, and it is excellent. As good as all this food is, it's surprisingly affordable. You'll find it difficult



to have to pay more than \$10 for your meal.

The physical restaurant itself is an interesting experience. The restaurant is clean, but always has an interesting crowd in it. Usually a mix of Mexicans from around the area, college students, and sports fans coming rolling in from White Sox games; the restaurant is a great place to people watch. One thing to note about the restaurant, though, is that there is a \$15 minimum to be able to use a credit card.

Overall, Taqueria San Jose is a great choice when it comes to Mexican food. Whether you're looking for a good dinner, a quick lunch, or a late night burrito run, this restaurant is perfect. The restaurant is available for dine in and take out, and can be reached at (312)225-7386.

Image courtesy of planet99.com

St. Vincent's genre-eclectic album stirs surprise sounds

By **Karl Rybaltowski**
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Strange Mercy is the latest effort by St. Vincent, an artist known for her combination of dark themes and lyrical matter, arrangements that swing between wildly eclectic and pleasantly poppy, and her captivating live performances. More than any of her previous efforts, it's deeply personal, incorporates a variety of sounds, and delves into very dark territory. Fortunately for listeners, these factors combine to form a deeply engrossing album that does not lose its luster after even several play-throughs.

St. Vincent is the brainchild of Annie Clark, who first gained notoriety as a member of

the Polyphonic Spree and as one of the backing performers for Sufjan Stevens on his tours.

During this latter endeavor, Clark released her first EP as St. Vincent, titled Paris is Burning. From this came her first album, Marry Me, which received critical success; following this was her sophomore effort, Actor, which gave her some commercial success, as well. After these releases, there followed a very dark period in Clark's life, details of which are scarce. Still, she set about writing music furiously as a form of therapy or catharsis, and the product of this was Strange Mercy - a very personal effort with sometimes jarring lyrics and instrumentation.

The album is full of contrasts and sharp turns. From the sunny pop (but dark lyrics) of the first single, Cruel, the material

immediately shifts to grungy, wall-of-sound elements in Cheerleader. The last note of that track morphs into the opening sound of Surgeon, with its mix of bombastic, sweeping orchestral sounds and funk-influenced guitar work, which then jumps into the seemingly indie-rock Northern Lights - which sheds any semblance of pop sensibility in its big, noise-laden finish. Yeah, that happens in four tracks.

Lyrically, the album offers glimpses into Clark's personal battles of the past year. One needs only to listen to the title track's bridge, "If I ever meet that / dirty policeman / who roughed you up / No, I... I don't know what," all sung with cool conviction, to see just how much the album draws from Clark's own experiences.

My own first experience of St. Vincent was when she toured with the Arcade Fire; compared to the huge ensemble that band played with, the sight of Annie Clark on stage, alone, with an assortment of instruments and effects and loop-back pedals, was a strange but exciting one. Since that moment, years ago, I have been continually pleasantly surprised by St. Vincent, and Strange Mercy is no exception. With all these varied influences, and the rapidity with which they change, Strange Mercy can be a challenging listen. Fortunately, it's also a rewarding one, at once aloof and personal, mysterious and relatable, and intriguing to listen to throughout. For an artist whose sound has been compared to David Bowie and Kate Bush, it's a fantastic effort and well worth a listen.

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