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Who's Your Mamacita?
Latinas of Musical Faith
by Margaret Moser & Belinda Acosta p.60

(L-r) Joanna Ramirez, Mary Welch, Sarah Fox, and Rose Reyes

VOLUME 28 ★ NUMBER 36 MAY 8, 2009

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TRES CHICAS CONTINUED FROM P.60

JOANNA RAMIREZ
EL CORAZÓN

Until two years ago, Joanna Ramirez was primarily known as a blues singer with a noted 2001 release called *Satisfy Me*. While headlining gigs were tough, she often sat in with the Nortons during their weekly run at the old Red's Scoot Inn and could be found playing and singing with Mary Welch y los Curanderos. Still, the mariachi music of her grandfather and father, not to mention the family's many years of playing a mixed bag of Latino, rock, and blues, paid off.

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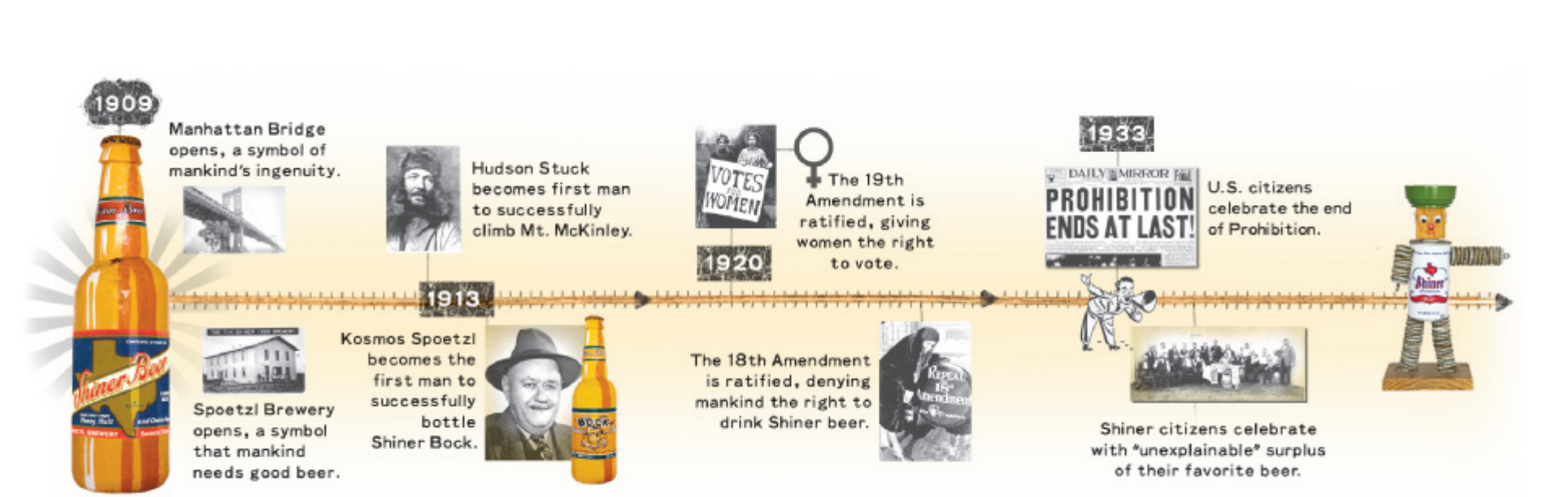
When veteran local bassist Larry Lange began expanding His Lonely Knights swamp-pop soul southward to San Antonio, he didn't just need a female foil for "Tu Prieto" and "Falta Tu Amor"; he needed a gutsy voice versed in blues and rock as well as one capable of duetting with Chicano soul legends such as the Royal Jesters' Dimas Garza.

Ramirez met the challenge with a homegirl's bravado, coming full circle from blues and rock to the music she was raised with. She and Garza created that duo magic that happens once in a great while, and she became his singing partner of choice. Garza's sudden death after a triumphant show in San Antonio last year stunned Ramirez.

"He was such an inspiration," laments Ramirez. "He had a childlike excitement about music and performing that was really brought home to me the night of our last show together at the Josephine Theatre in November. Dimas couldn't wait to go on, pacing back and forth, but of course he had to wait because he was one of the headliners. Dimas was still writing new songs, and I felt honored that he wanted to work with me in the future. I'm glad I was aware of the significance of working with him. Dimas had a big impact on me, and I'll never forget him." ■