

Greetings from Asbury Park, N.J.'s deSol

By **Michael Corcoran** | Friday, September 23, 2005, 09:51 PM

Big outdoor music festivals are not where I'm at — spiritually, musically, skin tone-wise — but I had a good feeling about the fourth annual Austin City Limits Music Festival when I arrived just after noon Friday to hear Bobby Bare Jr. play a lilting, almost nursery rhyme-like “I'll Be Around” that dissolved into blasts of white noise from guitarist Mike Grimes, while Deanna Varagona played a baritone sax about the size of a teenaged son.

There it was, the fest in a microcosm, so gentle and, at times, boring one moment and then, boom, like a palm slap to the head.

Bare Jr. was fine, but the first band of the day to really get me going was deSol, a Latin rock group from Asbury Park, N.J. Even though the heavily percussive band was wholly derivative — think Santana at Woodstock, or Del Castillo at Antone's, for that matter — singer Albie Monterosa packed plenty of charisma and guitarist Rich Soto was a soaring menace of shrill sustain. They got the crowd dancing salsa (or a reasonable facsimile) on “Blanco y Negro” and fanned the fervor with “Chango.” But when they closed with a cover of Tito Puente's “Oye Como Va” (the Santana version), they chose a crowd pleasing moment instead of one that would establish them as a creative force. But, you know, in the heat, the crush of people, the inclination to search for something else, an old favorite was probably the right choice.

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