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BlueLiners concert May 5 celebrates Cinco de Mayo in the Metro Café lounge.

## Blue Liners Ready for July 16 Summer Performance

By Laura Kloth  
*Staff Writer*

Tuning up to perform a July 16 concert, the core members of the Metro Blue Liners can think of a few reasons why their band has been around for more than a decade.

The most obvious reason according to band leader and Metro Schedules System Supervisor Michael Ortiz and band Executive Producer and Metro Customer Information Agent Marie Tervalon is their infinite passion for music and their love of performing.

Video: A taste of the BlueLiners in concert.

"Our real first performance was in the Overflow Room. Some of these people don't even play with us anymore," Tervalon said flipping through band photos of previous years.

Venues have included an outdoor barbecue at the Gateway Headquarters entrance, the Board Overflow Room, and currently, the Metro Café, where the band is happy to play for a free lunch every couple of months.

The July 16 concert will run from noon to 1:00 p.m.

## The Big Motivator: A Love of Music

When he selects members, Ortiz says, he doesn't look for professional musicians. Instead, he likes to recruit people who just enjoy playing music even if they don't know how to play. In fact, Ortiz has taught many of the previous and current members because they were eager to learn.

"We do the best we can with the people who are available," Ortiz said.



Band leader Michael Ortiz backs Lynda Gillam's flute solo in recent concert.

Members are: Carl Hobson, Schedule Checker, on congas, who will be retiring soon; Larry Morris, Schedule Checker, on keyboard; Joe Parise, Records Management Supervisor on guitar; Raul Gomez, Lead Photo Copying Machine Operator, on drums; Lynda Gillam, Sr. Real Estate Officer on flute; Paul Burke, Transportation Planning Manager, on Sax; and Tervalon who sings along with Belen Marquez, Human Resources Analyst and Pricila Hidalgo, Administrative Analyst. Gomez, who works in the copy center, designs the T-shirts and posters.

The upcoming concert will have Bus Operator Carlos Torres accompany the group on his accordion with special guest, Rodger Maxwell, Scheduling Systems Project Leader, singing a few country and western tunes.

Ortiz says he picks the songs with the help of members, but reminds them that their choice will have to balance with the band's abilities.

And as they play, he says, the objective to give the song the Blue Liner interpretation, not to duplicate the artist. "If you want to hear the exact thing, go to the karaoke club," he says.

Typically, the band's song list includes 14 songs to play during an hour. One of Ortiz's favorites is "Get Your Kicks on Route 66" written in 1946, because of its blues and jazz sound. The band sometimes picks songs according to a theme or holiday, like the recent Cinco de Mayo tunes: "Mariposa," "Frenesi" and "Amor a la Mexicana."

Over the years, the band has gone through names like "Metromorphosis," "Jammers" and "P-2," a name they picked up from the location where they practice a few a times a week. The Blue Liners name stuck because of the band's love for blues music.

### Fun and Family

Ortiz, with 36 years at Metro under his belt, is a self-taught guitarist who began playing some 50 years ago when he was a young teen.

A 37-year employee, Tervalon remembers being introduced to music at an even younger age when she sang in a neighborhood band.

"I love music," she says. "My father was a promoter in the record industry at one time. He was instrumental in getting a lot of the black groups into music. And he was also instrumental in getting black DJs on the radio out here in Los Angeles and other areas."

In her case, it's truly a family affair. Her younger brother is Kenny

Gradney, a bass guitarist for the band “Little Feat” and as a child she also played with Al McKay, who later played with “Earth, Wind and Fire.”

Tervalon says the Blue Liners plan to keep going for years to come for another obvious reason. “It’s just to have fun. You know we really like it. We all love music and we do it just for fun,” she said.