

CHICAGO READER

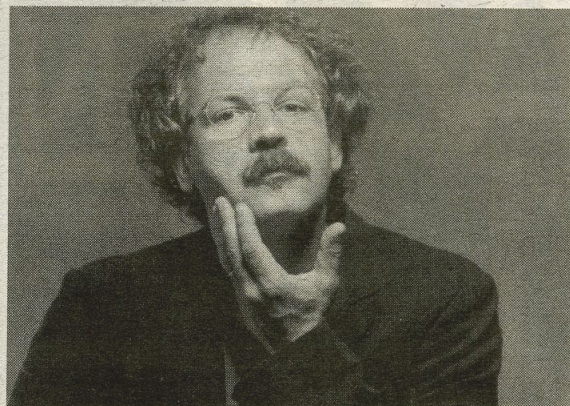
Music



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Gianmaria Testa

GIANMARIA TESTA Singer-songwriter Gianmaria Testa has been called the Italian Leonard Cohen, and true enough, he shares a few traits with that revered mope. Testa writes lyrics with a poetic concision—or at least the English translations included in his CDs read that way. On “Potrai,” a song from his most recent album, 2003’s *Altre Latitudini* (Le Chant du Monde), he uses just nine lines to express his certainty that a lover who claims she wants nothing to do with him is kidding herself; songs with multiple verses weave in elegant metaphors free of the usual love-song clichés. Thankfully Testa can carry a tune much better than Cohen—he sings in a low, burnished voice that recalls his fellow countryman Paolo Conte—and his arrangements bridge the gap between small-group swing and acoustic-guitar balladeering, vividly framing his voice and adding a lovely Italian folk melodicism to his songs. This is his Chicago debut. ➤ 7 PM, Preston Bradley Hall, Chicago Cultural Center, 78 E. Washington, 312-744-6630. **Free A** —Peter Margasak