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CD REVIEWS

DE TIERRA Y ORO

DECEMBER 13, 2012 | ANGEL ROMERO | LEAVE A COMMENT

Sofia Rei

[De Tierra y Oro](#) (Cascabelera / Lilihouse Music LM012-CD, 2012)

I find that by the time you get to November, the number of interesting albums decreases rapidly, as labels schedule albums for the New Year. Sofia Rei's new recording, titled [De Tierra y Oro](#), which came out in late November, is a great late 2012 album that definitely deserves attention.



Sofia Rei - [De Tierra y Oro](#)

Although Argentina has produced many superb vocalists, the attention in recent years has focused on Peruvian vocalists. Sofia Rei, a world traveler and song researcher with a vibrant voice, demonstrates that she is one of the new talents in the Latin American scene.

Sofia Rei, who is currently based in New York City, has absorbed the traditional musics of her homeland and other South American countries and has added elements of jazz, electronics and global sounds to create a fascinating sound. She depicts [De Tierra y Oro](#) as a series of "philosophical wanderings." She produced the album along with her longtime bassist and collaborator Jorge Roeder and co-producer Fabrice Dupont.

"A lot of these grooves are made up, they're not necessarily preexisting styles of music," says Rei. "In certain songs you can hear recognizable styles such as chacarera or huayno, but in other songs I've made up new grooves depending on the needs of the composition."

Sofia Rei's United States-based band includes Josh Deutsch (trumpet, flugelhorn), Eric Kurimski (acoustic guitar), Jorge Roeder (bass), Jean-Christophe Maillard (electric guitar), and Yayo Serka (drums).

[De Tierra y Oro](#) features overdubbed vocals, electric guitars, loops and drum machines as well as Andean charangos, Paraguayan harps, Colombian marimbas from the Pacific Coast, Argentine bombos, and Peruvian cajones.

The album's themes include a cockfight in Cartagena (Colombia), a nightmare in Buenos Aires, a love letter in New York, a haunted man in the Andes, Rei's version of Chavela Vargas' classic ranchera 'La Llorona.'

Sofia Rei describes some of the songs:

"I was in Cartagena [Colombia] and got invited by a boat captain to see what he called 'the real Cartagena,' where all the workers live, and to witness a cockfight. The song captures the feeling of being there: 'My luck started in Boca Chica and got lost in the eyes of a captain. ... The town lights up in the afternoon and in the spurs I can feel the fear that's present.... The roosters are the only hope around here, to the ones that never had, never will, the ones that only lay claim to a small illusion.'"

'Risa' (Laugh) – "The song is kind of an ironic take on the traditional music from this area. A lot of the themes are about carnival season, and about how the devil presents itself, impersonated by somebody. The lyrics say 'I have lost my laugh, it's always hiding somewhere, and even if I looked for it I wouldn't know where to go.'"

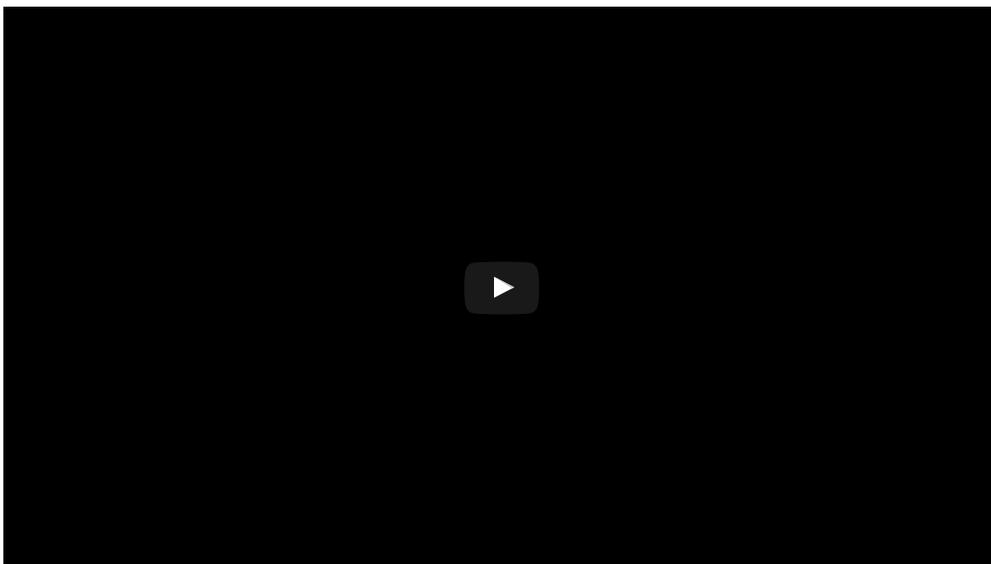
'La Llorona' (The Weeping Woman) – "Chavela's singing is raw, pure and haunting emotion, like a scream from the earth," Rei says. "The song itself has about 20 possible verses – in Mexican music different interpreters would add their own verses, and they'd get passed around and added to. Of all the songs on the album, this was one of the least planned – we never had a written arrangement. The landó style we play it in has this sensual pulsation, very mysterious, pushing the groove forward and backward at the same time."

The title track 'De Tierra y Oro' "is about all the contrasts you go through as a performer," says Rei. "You have to incarnate all these different situations and feelings. That's the idea of the whole record: through all these different moods and characters you inhabit when you're performing, this very deep connection to the audience is born."

"Arriba" ("Above"), the closing track is "dedicated to the idea of God," Rei says. "I don't know if I believe or not, but truth is that when hardship comes, I have to grab onto something."

Guests on De Tierra y Oro include percussionists Facundo Guevara and Samuel Torres, Moroccan vocalist Malika Zarra, trumpeter Josh Deutsch, trombonist Ryan Keberle and harpist Celso Duarte.

"La Llorona" Video



Next concerts:

Monday, Jan 14 – New York, NY – Zinc Bar – APAP South America Showcase

Sunday, Jan 20 – New York, NY – Cornelia Street Cafe

Saturday, March 16 – New York, NY – Apollo Café

Buy [De Tierra y Oro](#)



Author: Angel Romero

Angel Romero y Ruiz has been writing about world music and progressive music for many years. He founded the websites worldmusiccentral.org and musicasdelmundo.com. Angel co-produced “Musica NA”, a music show for Televisión Española (TVE) in Spain that featured an eclectic mix of world music, fusion, electronica, new age and contemporary classical music. Angel also produced and remastered world music and electronic music albums, compilations and boxed sets for Alula Records, Ellipsis Arts, Music of the World, Lektronic Soundscapes, and Mindchild Records. He was also the executive producer of the first Latino feature film made in North Carolina titled “Los sueños de Angélica.”

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