

Tivolí Echoes «an Oath to the Continuity of the Cuban Son Music»

By: Giusetta León García / CubaSí

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This was stated by Jorge Cambet Torres, Director of this group from Santiago de Cuba during the premiere of his most recent production "**Juramento**", a homage to the work of Miguel Matamoros that they recorded with Bis Music label and with the collaboration of prominent figures from the national and international scene.

Excellent credentials are the two singles already on radios, El que siembra su maíz, and Coco seco; where Puerto Rican Gilberto Santa Rosa and our Mayito Rivera are guest artists.

Regarding this album we spoke with Cambet via whatsapp.

How did the idea of ??this tribute album to Miguel Matamoros was born?

"Ecos del Tivoli is a group that belongs to the catalog of Artistic Representation Agency "**Son de Cuba**" of EGREM. Created 29 years ago, on March 20th, 1992, inspired by the work of Trío Matamoros.

Our goal: to study the life and work of this famous musical group as a foundational element. Then the group has evolved passing through various formations since their first creation: a trio, then a quintet, sextet, up to the current formation of Septet, performing songs of different authors and the group itself, but always keeping as style the music of Matamoros. Therefore, of the 7 albums of the group, 5 have had to do with this Matamoros style.

"So we thought that for 2019, for the 125 anniversary of the birth of Miguel Matamoros and the 94 of the foundation of the Trio, record thirty songs, all written by Miguel, including, of course, his classics, but also others less known songs".

Can you tell us about the process of making the album?

"Our idea was welcomed by the Bis Music label and José Manuel García, who is the producer of the album, along with Daniel Legon in the recording, mixing, and mastering. The graphic design was in charge of Ricardo Monnar

and the notes of the album were of José Manuel García, and Eduardo Blanco.

"We started recording at the "Eusebio Delfín" Studios, in Cienfuegos, in August 2019. Then we continue in January 2020 in "Siboney" Studio of EGREM in Santiago de Cuba. The difficulties of the pandemic rescheduled the album ending and premiere for this year and had an official release by Bis Music label on May 3rd."

You have luxury guest artists. How did they get to the album?

"Many collaborated in this production, from Santiago de Cuba, Zulema Iglesias, who plays the bolero-son "Realidades". The instrumentalists Rubén Leliebre on the flute on the song "El paralítico"; Lazaro Bandera percussionist from Conga de los Hoyos and percussionist Joaquín Solorzano with the Chinese cornet they take part in the song "Alegre conga". These guests from Santiago recorded here at EGREM's Siboney Studios in Santiago under the collaborative production of Jorge Luis Pujals and the recording of Máximo Espinosa.

"From Havana, Sixto Llorente (the Indian from Aragon) collaborated, featuring in Lagrimas negras, also Mayito Rivera, who plays the rumba-son "Coco seco", Haydee Milanés in the classic "Olvido" and María Victoria Rodríguez, who plays the bolero "Juramento".

"Gilberto Santa Rosa agreed to collaborate from Puerto Rico on the track "El que siembra su maiz", Andy Montañez in the Son-Pregon "Baila mi pregon", Danny Rivera on the song "Tu sabes", the Puerto Rican singer Choco Orta in the bolero-son "Que Siga el tren" and the instrumentalists Edwin Colon Zayas with his guitar in "Oye mi conga" and the bassist of Gran Combo de Puerto Rico Freddy Rivera, who takes part in the song "El que siembra su maiz with Gilberto Santa Rosa.

"The coordination with these guests was carried out by Gabriel Soler Oriz, who does excellent public relations work with the group and representation.

And how much do they contribute?

I believe that the participation of these guest artists brings more contemporaneity to the songs, refreshes a classic repertoire, makes it more interesting and ready for a broader and demanding audience. As well the nuances with the individualities of these artists, since they do it in their own way without losing the authenticity of these works.

Why did you choose Juramento as the title for the album?

"I believe we are committed to the conservation and defense of the authentic Cuban music, we are speaking about one of the most important Cuban musicians and composers of all time, who imprinted in their way of doing elements that were contributions to music like the incursion into the bolero music by introducing the montuno music in the second part of the bolero, their way of combining the plucking of the lead guitar with a phenomenal accompanying guitar, joined by the second voice and the duet of voices, fusing everything with the trova music. All these elements form that Matamoros style, a seal that we try to enrich in our days but that undoubtedly have us committed.

"Now with the celebration on May 8th precisely the day of Miguel's birth, 127 years ago, and the 96th anniversary of the founding of Matamoros Trio, "Juramento", an anthology is welcome because we are swearing the continuity of the Cuban son music with respect and a look at this great exponent of the genre.

Satisfied with the end result?

"I believe the result is very positive, you can always want more, aim to perfection, perhaps we would have wanted more time for this production, but the challenge of covering in only 30 songs such a huge work we did just fine from my point of view. First, because we cover several genres, there's Son music as the main genre of the album, but there's bolero, the bolero-son, the son-pregón, the habanera music, a blues-cha very little known, just a whim, also a rumba-son and the conga among others.

"The arrangements were collective and we had the collaboration of a musician, composer and arranger from Santiago de Cuba, Esteban Blanco, in El paralítico, El que siembra su maiz, El Trio y el Ciclón, and Camarones y mamoncillos.

For a group that was born precisely as a defender of this genre, How important is the celebration of the

Cuban Son Music Day?

"Son music is present in the Cuban music panorama. Cuban music is very rich, today the academic level is huge and the proposals are diversified, a lot of work is done, for example on popular dance music which has evolved with timba and is today very appreciated in Cuba and the world, but all this has a common denominator that is the rhythmic base of our son music. It's not possible to move your feet if the key of its rhythmic cell is not introduced. Many have made Cuban music famous worldwide with the son music in the lead.

That's why it's fair that we fight for it to be declared by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. For the moment let's celebrate May 8th as National Day of Son Music in Cuba ".

Translated by Amilkal Labañino / CubaSí Translation Staff
