

Kelvis Ochoa, a soundtrack to celebrate his 50th birthday

By: Giusette León García / CubaSi
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Actually, this is the soundtrack of the television series **Promesas**, which is being broadcasted by Cubavision channel Tuesday night, but it also became the musical album with which Kelvis Ochoa dreamed to celebrate his 50th birthday.

"Finally, it will be released on my 51st birthday, but it is ok," he told us in a Bis Music record label room. Bis Music embraced the production of this album and Kelvis said that the series delayed due to several reasons, including the pandemic. The goal was that the CD to be released simultaneously with the TV series.

*"I named it **50 grados** and it is a varied album. The series has a lot of outside location shots where there were very diverse people and well, music is also diverse in such context. Thus, it was a project where I had to do a little bit of everything; namely, urban music, singer-songwriting, boleros..."* he added in a chat with the press, a talk that navigated from music to life again and again, as it has happened in the work of former member of musical group Habana Abierta.

About how he became part of **Promesas**, he said: *“Mirta González, general director, is a very good friend of mine. I have worked with her in other projects like **La hoja de la caleta**, where I also was responsible of the music. She talked me about the series. I thought it was interesting and then I wrote these songs.”*

“I love this CD. I featured with wonderful people, great artists that I love and admire a lot.”

Great artists perform with Kelvis this time. Among them, he highlights the figure of Pablo Milanés, with whom he shares a beautiful song entitled No hay dos: *“It was meant to be the final song of the TV series, but the song actually is pretty much used through all the structure of the series. I also sang with Gema Corredera. Gema and I have a story. She was my first musical producer. She was also my mentor. I learned a lot with her when she worked with Pavel Urquiza. Then, I sing with Leoni Torres in the opening song of the series. I have a wonderful musical story with Leoni as well. I wrote for him five songs for his latest **CD Alma cubana**, which is nominated to the Grammys. Then I work with a young girl, whose name is Magela, we wrote together one of the coolest songs in the CD—a mix between urban and pop music—, which I believe young people will love it. I feature with El Chacal, who is referent in the urban music and finally, I perform with my daughter Isla Ochoa.”*

Star musicians were also part of the CD and they are Jorgito Aragón, Yaroldy Abreu, Samuel in the bass Roberto Reyes, Yarima Blanco playing the three-chord guitar, is basically a team of musicians with whom I have worked before and I feel comfortable with them. I also work with Maykel Bárzaga and his son Maykelito in their private recording studio.

Playing different musical genres has been challenging. As it was to work for a TV series where every chapter poses a new drama, with its own subject, conflicts, and particular protagonists:

“This is an added challenge. In a soap opera; for instance, the song fits all chapters as the same characters will be there acting until the end of the plot. However, a very specific song must be written for every leading character in

*every story. That was pretty interesting. Descemer and I had done something similar for the series **Siete días en La Habana** and it was exhausting, amazing, a plus in my work. I am a workhorse as a composer. I write every day. So it was a gift to me."*

In fact, when the proposal of **Promesas** came, several songs were already written: *"some tracks were already written and I did the same with others as I read the script of the series. The scripts were fantastic. I am a script-predator. I love working based on the script even though I may have the songs already written. I always relate them with any story..."*

He has no prejudice in writing for hire: *"A very good friend of mine, Maestro Juan Formell worked for hire and made great works." He said to me: "Hey, this is a plus for your work," and he was right. I feel pretty comfortable in doing so and I never underestimate such a work. It is always challenging to face a script, a story, different directors..."*

Kelvis is greatly satisfied with **50 grados** and with the way he is working in **Promesas**: *"I am pretty happy. Giselle, the editor, made a superb job. We were talking about via WhatsApp, sending each other files and everything we were doing. I am very happy with her work and all the series staff."*

While we enjoy watching this TV series, Kelvis is piling up ideas and "promise" to surprise us for good.

"I wrote a children music's CD in this lockdown that has lasted a year and a half. The CD is made of ten tracks and I want to start recording now! It is both a dream to me and challenge. It is very difficult to write for children."

Translated by Sergio A. Paneque Díaz / CubaSí Translation Staff
