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**GRAMMY Award-Nominated Latinx Artist Sofia Rei
Unveils the Elasticity of the Human Voice in a New-World Digital Realm
With Boundless Explorations on Latest Album:**

UMBRAL

*Sofia Rei Backpacks to Elqui Valley in Chile
To Write and Record the Songs for UMBRAL,
A Self-Searching Expedition in the Remote Province Serves as Nexus of Ambitious Recording*

"Sofia Rei, an Argentine singer now based in New York, conjured a wildly eclectic, near hallucinatory international mix from her living room with her band: Andean, jazz, funk, electronics. True to Globalfest's boundary-scrambling mission, she sang about living under 'Un Mismo Cielo': 'The Same Sky.'" -**Jon Pareles, *The New York Times***

"It's a fascinating exploration of her own creative process, as well as a capsule history of musical traditions from the southern-most tip of the Americas." -**Felix Contreras, NPR "Alt.Latino"**

"...award-winning Argentine vocalist and songwriter Sofia Rei provides a concert that blends South American folk traditions with experimental pop and electronic music. That mix of tradition and modernity extends to her surroundings, which features traditional iconography, robotic 'saints,' exuberant plants and looping pedals." -**Bob Boilen, NPR "Tiny Desk Concert"**

New York, NY – Thursday, March 18, 2021 – GRAMMY Award-nominated Latinx artist **Sofia Rei** is an ever-traveler perpetually seeking new expressions for her innate gift as a vocalist and songwriter. Produced by **JC Maillard (Angelique Kidjo, Richard Bona)**, Rei's latest recording, **UMBRAL (Cascabelera Records; Release Date: June 4, 2021)**, takes her deep into the mountains of the Elqui Valley in Chile to capture intimate portrayals of a woman fighting for her place in the world. Rei set off on a solo trek across the rugged Eastern Chilean terrain with two backpacks of recording gear, and a mind overflowing with the complexities of modern life. **UMBRAL** results in a masterpiece steeped in folkloric tradition and digital futurism.

Classically trained and an ardent inquisitor of the intricacies of South American folk music, Rei has released five albums of **John Zorn's** music on **Tzadik Records** and four independent recordings under her own name. Rei was among the featured artists at **globalFEST 2021**, which resulted in an electrifying **NPR Tiny Desk (Home) Concert** and subsequent photo running in **Jon Pareles'** globalFEST review in **The New York Times** (January 15, 2021). Her role as **Professor** at **NYU Tisch Clive**

Davis Institute – where she designed the “New Perspectives in Latin Music” course – places her at the forefront of uncovering the broad diversity of traditional Latin American music styles integrated with new technologies and cutting-edge trends.

Rei set off on her travels to the Elqui Province with a charango in hand ready for an uninhibited excursion to record unorthodox vocal sketches in the form of loops based on a series “Cinco Poemas Cínicos” (“Five Cynical Poems”). Incisive and imaginative, Rei’s poetry responds to heartbreak, deception, and disappointment with unrestrained candor. Her self-sufficient compositions originate from a vocal layering structure allowing each work to stand on its own.

“I’ve been hearing traces of *UMBRAL* in my head for years,” says Rei. “I wanted to experiment with looping machines and enter the world of sound design. The Elqui Valley was where I needed to venture and confront a well of emotions that would translate into these songs. After experimenting with different formats from solo to full band settings, I realized that my longtime collaborator JC Maillard was the perfect person to take this project further and to fully develop it the way I envisioned. Maillard’s production style on *UMBRAL* is best described as combining pixels with real paintings. He utilized abstractions of feelings and took control of the ambient soundscape.”

JC Maillard adds, “The rhythmic elements on *UMBRAL* traverse across Latin America and really are not represented in the electronic music scene. It’s essential to respect the regional accents of all these disparate rhythms. It’s no longer about zeros and ones. My role was to keep the DNA of the groove alive and use Rei’s vocals as the bedrock, the melody, and the driving force behind everything.”

UMBRAL opens with “La Otra” (“The Other”), an ode to **Gabriela Mistral** – one of the most riveting poets in Latin America who was born in the Elqui Province. Mistral was the first woman and the 5th Latin American to win a **Nobel Prize** in Literature. Rei discovered a book of her poetry and the beautiful poem entitled “La Otra” (“The Other,” or “The Other Woman”). The poem honed in Rei’s exact experience in the valley and her process of rebirth, and transformation. The rhythm is loosely based on a Colombian *seresésé*.

One of the few songs on *UMBRAL* in a 4/4 time signature, “Un Mismo Cielo” (“The Same Sky”) charts out the dance of two lovers who are in different hemispheres though connected by the same sky above. “Negro Sobre Blanco” (“Black on White”) describes a feeling of uneasiness – a preamble to a nervous breakdown. A solitary woman journeys searching for answers and clarity. Rei’s vocal loops and two converging lines of charango are instrumental to the construct that’s expanded on by Maillard’s genius. A mix of a *huayno* (an Andean musical style shared between Bolivia, Perú, Argentina, Chile, and Ecuador) and an Afro-Bolivian *saya* fuses with the brilliant studio work of drummer-percussionist **Franco Pinna**.

“La Caída” (“The Fall”) is the most intensely personal composition on *UMBRAL*. Rei writes it in memory of her father who suffered a consequential fall at a construction site while supervising a Brahma Beer factory. The actual fall and collapse of the superhero image she had of her father, along with a chain of unfortunate subsequent events the accident unleashed, are at the heart of “La Caída.” Rei obsessively listened to **Bjork**’s *Vulnicura* album, and its lasting influence is evident.

“Escarabajo Digital” (“Digital Beetle”) features the debut writing collaboration between Rei and Maillard. Though they’ve co-arranged albums including **KETER** for John Zorn, *UMBRAL* highlights both artists on vocals as they sing about conversations with close-ones (particularly family members) that show no signs of progress, only frustration. “La Quinta Pata” (“The Fifth Leg”) carries a hefty dose of sarcasm. It talks of people who always find the imperfection, the wrong detail, or the defect in somebody or in a situation. A common phrase in Spanish refers to this person as only looking for the fifth leg in a cat.

Rei initially recorded the complex-metered bass line of “Helvética 12” with other vocal loops on her harmonizer at the Elqui Valley, though her rap came later while poolside on tour in Florida. Rei says, “My friend Tupac and I were talking about relationships and at some point, I said, ‘you know, there is one thing I can’t stand of a guy: spelling mistakes! If I have to explain to him how to spell...then I am done!’ We couldn’t stop laughing!” The impetus of the lyrics are of a failed love story where Rei receives a disappointing email by somebody that not only makes significant spelling mistakes, but also bores her to death with his use of the Helvetica 12 font. Two of her favorite musical partners, **Jorge Roeder** on bass and **Leo Genovese** on piano and synthesizers, brought their magic to the track.

Rei was awarded the **Cafe Royal Cultural Foundation Music Production Grant** to help record *UMBRAL*. Sponsored by Cafe Royal, Rei will perform at **Shapeshifter Lab** (Brooklyn, NY) on April 23, 2021. Additional concerts will be announced in the coming months.

To view Sofia Rei’s online press kit, please visit: www.sofiamusic.com/umbral-pr

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