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NETFLIX'S *SELENA: THE SERIES* IS A SHOW FIT FOR THE QUEEN—OF TEJANO MUSIC—CELEBRATING ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL MEXICAN-AMERICAN ENTERTAINERS OF THE 20TH CENTURY

→ BY ROSY CORDERO



↙ Christian Serratos reaches for the stars as Selena Quintanilla on Netflix's new series

SELENA QUINTANILLA SPENT A large part of her short life in the spotlight, much of which was reenacted and shared with her mob of adoring fans in the 1997 drama *Selena* starring Jennifer Lopez. But there's only so much a 127-minute film can cover (including her 1995 murder at the age of 23), which is where Netflix's *Selena: The Series* steps in. Who was Selena before the fame, when she was simply a daughter, sister, and friend?

The Walking Dead star Christian Serratos will dance across that terrain—not an easy task when countless devotees have high expectations of what her portrayal of the Queen of Tejano Music should be.

"I still find it difficult to talk about," Serratos tells EW about taking on the iconic role. "It's so personal to me because I'm fully aware of how personal it is to all her fans. I feel this incredible sense of pressure, but good pressure, because if I needed any motivation to do my best in this role besides how much I love her, it's because I don't want to let anyone down. I know how deeply this woman resides in the hearts of so many."

On the nine-episode series, which also includes her childhood (where she's played by Madison Taylor Baez), fans will see Serratos re-create Selena's 1994 Houston Astrodome concert and a performance of "Como la Flor," where—as she does during all the musical moments on the series—Serratos performs in unison with the real Selena's music and vocals. Behind-the-scenes observers—including Noemi Gonzalez, who plays Selena's sister, Suzette (also a series EP)—became emotional.

"Having Suzette and the Quintanilla family on board was a huge

gift," Serratos says emphatically. "The series is going to be very eye-opening for people because we're showing so much more of Selena's life that we learned because of them. When I got the role, I was given her music from the show and there was this brief moment where I felt deceit. *How am I such a huge fan and I hadn't heard these songs?* That's why the series will be so great! We already know the iconic songs, but there's so much more music to enjoy either again or for the first time."

While he was developing the show, creator/executive producer Moisés Zamora met with the Quintanillas (portrayed by actors including *Desperate Housewives* alum Ricardo Chavira as her father, Abraham), who showed him never-before-seen memorabilia that inspired his storytelling.

"I spent about a week with the family in Corpus Christi [Tex.] interviewing them, collecting anecdotes and documents for my research," says Zamora. "They gave me newspapers, home videos, journals, and family photos they've never shared publicly. They were instrumental in making this happen. I'm honored to be able to help share this story, which at its essence is about a hardworking Latino family who achieved the American dream with determination. It's very inspiring. Behind all the glamorous costumes was a real human being full of dreams and aspirations whose life was sadly taken away too soon." ●

SELENA: THE SERIES
STREAMER NETFLIX
DATE 12.4.2020
GENRE DRAMA

↓ Cody Hoyt (Ryan Phillippe) is on the case



Big Sky

NETWORK ABC	DATE 11.17.2020	GENRE DRAMA
TIME 10 PM		

David E. Kelley (*Big Little Lies*) returns to network television with *Big Sky*, evoking the description *Yellowstone* meets *True Detective*. Based on C.J. Box's novels, the thriller follows private eyes Cassie Dewell (Kylie Bunbury, *Pitch*) and Cody Hoyt (Ryan Phillippe) as they join forces with Hoyt's estranged wife, Jenny (Katheryn Winnick, *Vikings*), to search for sisters kidnapped on a remote Montana highway. When they discover that the girls aren't the first to disappear, it fast becomes a race to stop a killer.

The show's unraveling mystery-box approach applies equally to its complex characters and cryptic crimes, Phillippe explains. "I love shows that end on cliffhangers and have you waiting with bated breath for the next episode," he says. "Big Sky is very much in that realm. The show has tons of humor. It moves really quickly. It's got a lot of surprises." It's so shrouded in secrets that Phillippe can't say much except that it's unlike anything he's seen on TV before, particularly in its setting. "Montana is very much a character in the show," he notes. "The notion of Big Sky and wide-open spaces means that anything can be lurking behind any corner. People have this notion of it being bucolic and idyllic. Parts of Montana definitely are. But the characters on this show are investigating the darker parts of Montana. There's a lot of undiscovered territories."

—MAUREEN LEE LENKER