

SHAKIRA

On May 2 from the planet's altar

There's a question that has followed me since the day I received the invitation, and I've had to travel many miles, and just as many thoughts, before I could answer it. Why me. Why Copacabana. Why Rio de Janeiro. Why now.

To answer that, I have to go back, to a day when everything I had built collapsed all at once. It wasn't a long process, there were no gradual signs: It was one single morning when I woke up as a different woman, living a different life. And the next day, I still had to get up, make breakfast, take the kids to school, answer the phone, keep a career going. Life doesn't give women a break when they suddenly find themselves alone, carrying everything.

From that morning until today, I've had to entirely reinvent myself. As a mother, as a provider, as an artist, as a woman. And from that learning process, sometimes messy, sometimes illuminated by a kind of clarity only pain can bring, this tour was born: *Las mujeres ya no lloran* (*Women No Longer Cry*.) It's not a cry for revenge, nor a flag of victimhood. It's exactly the opposite. It's the quiet realization that crying is no longer enough, that

there are children to raise, bills to pay, lives to push forward. And that it can be done, and it can be done with dignity.

As I traveled the world with this tour, I started to see my own face reflected in many others. Women who waited for me after shows to tell me, in two minutes and with shining eyes, their own version of the same story. Women who were alone but not defeated. And I understood that what I thought was a deeply personal experience was actually the shared biography of an entire generation of Latinas.

Because the Latina woman has changed.

For decades, books and movies portrayed her as devoted to the home, quiet, secondary. That image is outdated. Today's Latina has decided to move forward and become the provider of everything. She is the sole provider, makes decisions, leads, builds projects, raises children on her own if she has to. But she hasn't confused her priorities. Above all, she remains the heart of the home, the temple of love for her family, the one who preserves the values and affections passed on to her children, the one who turns life into a dance even when the day is hard.

She does what she has to do, yes, but she hasn't lost sight of why she does it. And at this moment in history, that's not a small detail. It's a way of not losing herself.

And then I arrived in Brazil. And I learned that in this country, there are 20 million single mothers quietly raising their families, but with a determination that shakes you. Twenty million women

holding up households, holding up schools, holding up a huge portion of a nation's economy without asking for permission or recognition.

When I heard that number, I stayed silent for a long time. And then I thought: wow, I'm one of them. I hope this concert can be, even if just for one night, a mirror where those women can see themselves, because they are the ones who carry, in their bodies and in their daily lives, the purest DNA of the contemporary Latina woman.

That woman is who I want to dedicate May 2 to.

And to dedicate it, there is no better place in the world than Copacabana. Because if you stop and look at Rio de Janeiro, you realize that the planet placed there, almost on purpose, everything a human being needs to stay true to themselves. It's as if nature wanted to make it so obvious that there would be no doubt. The ocean. The moon. The sunset. The beach. The waves. The drum that appears on any corner without being called. The mountains that descend toward the water. People who understood, a long time ago, that life is meant to be danced. Rio is a place where the planet seems to want to take us by the hand and say: *Look, this is what matters, don't get distracted.*

What matters is being present. With your feet in the sand. With gratitude for the planet we were given to live on. Because in that presence, there is love, there is happiness, there is the meaning of life. You don't have to look for it anywhere else.

And yet we are living in a moment when the world has forgotten that. We spend hours with our eyes locked on screens designed to move us through fear and set us against one another.

Meanwhile, there are real wars, real missiles, young people dying over words that aren't even theirs. We have lost sight of what truly matters because someone designed an algorithm to make us lose it.

That is my answer.

That's why me. That's why Copacabana. That's why now.

Because if planet Earth had an altar capable of speaking for itself, that altar would be Copacabana. And in a world confused by algorithmic manipulation, Rio offers humanity that altar so we can see clearly again.

We'll meet there, where the human tide blends with the tide of the sea. And if we dare to sing together, with one voice, on May 2, maybe that night the entire planet will hear us and remember what we were about to forget.

With love,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'S' followed by the name 'Shak' written in a cursive script.