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The Netflix "Rebelde" reboot follows a new group of student musicians at an international boarding school. The show features Jerónimo Cantillo, Andrea Chaparro, Lizeth Selene and Azul Guaita. (Netflix/Mayra Ortiz)



by Odalis Garcia Gorra

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With shows like "Saved by the Bell," "iCarly," "Gossip Girl," the much talked about "And Just Like That" and the recently announced HBO Max "Degrassi" revival, in the last few years of television, the reboot has reigned.

Much of our streaming and binge-watching has hinged on nostalgia. The Netflix "Rebelde" reboot is no different. In the first episode of the new series, we are taken back to Elite Way School, now called EWS (said by sounding it out), within the same universe as the original "Rebelde" (2004). In one scene a new student gazes at a trophy locker where paraphernalia from the OG Rebelde band hangs like an altar to times gone by.

A lot of Latinx millennials have memories of dashing home after school to catch a glimpse of the theatrical antics of the original Mexican telenovela. "Rebelde" wasn't just a series — it launched the musical phenomenon that was RBD, a chart-topping pop group that sold out concerts and earned countless gold records.

In an attempt to distance itself from the original and make its own mark, Netflix's "Rebelde" loses much of the melodrama, and frankly ridiculousness that the original held. Unlike shows like "Jane the Virgin" and "Ugly Betty," the remake was not made for an American audience. Instead, it is a Gen Z refresh while also taking advantage of Latinx Millennial nostalgic feelings.



Plotlines in the Netflix "Rebelde" reboot include performances of music by RBD, a Mexican Latin pop group that gained popularity from the original telenovela. (Netflix/Mayra Ortiz)

In this remake, we follow a new group of student musicians at the international boarding school: Jana Cohen (Azul Guaita Bracamontes), a Gen Z social media pop star looking to be taken seriously; Estebán Torres (Sergio Mayer Mori), a scholarship student who doesn't quite fit in with the wealthy kids; Luka Colucci (Franco Masini), the Argentinian spoiled son of an influential businessman and the nephew of the iconic Mia Colucci (Anahí) from the original RBD; Dixon (Jerónimo Cantillo), an aspiring Colombian rapper and reggaetonero; M.J. (Andrea Chaparro), a sheltered religious young woman from California who speaks mostly in Spanglish; and Andi (Lizeth Selene), a rebellious spirit who also happens to be queer.

Unlike the telenovela format of way-too-long seasons, the show is condensed into eight episodes (Season 2 dropped July 27). The main conflict centers on a secret society called La Logia (The Lodge), which in the original telenovela went after other

scholarship students, an intent that still lingers in the remake. The show starts with the new students being grabbed from their beds in the middle night. The core six characters are asked to "prove" themselves by donning the uniforms of RBD and singing the emblematic song, "Rebelde." Things go awry, of course, when a fire destroys part of the very expensive-looking music classroom. The protagonists are left to solve this mystery so that their precarious position at the school is secured.

Each of them carries their own secrets. Estebán has a murky past that's somehow linked to Luka; Dixon doesn't seem to be exactly who he says he is; and M.J.'s ambition gets the best of her at times.

The stories add to the drama, but the lack of chemistry among the cast leaves viewers struggling to find connection between the characters. How can these six people come together as a band, let alone as friends?

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A standout episode is the show's sixth installment. Students in the music program are tasked with creating a music video using a song from RBD's discography. Our core six, whose band name is Sin Nombre, take on "Sálvame" to create a stunning rendition of one of RBD's most beautiful songs.

The references to the original "Rebelde" aren't only in song, there are the parallels in romantic relationships such as that of Jana and Estebán and Mia and Miguel Arango’s (Alfonso Herrera) — two people from different economic classes finding common ground in music. There is more inclusivity in terms of nationalities — since the original cast was entirely Mexican (for example, Dixon is Colombian and an upperclass student is from Brazil), and there is a semi-open queer relationship. The latter has become popular on social media in the last few months since it is, unfortunately, one of the few representations of love between two young women on television.

"Rebelde" may be a standard teen drama with all the required secret societies, love triangles and jealousies. But while the original telenovela wasn't what some people might deem Oscar-worthy, it added flair that the clean-cut version Netflix made could never aspire to.