**LIDO PIMIENTA**
***La Belleza***
**2025**

It has been five years since the GRAMMY-nominated and Polaris Prize-winning artist Lido Pimienta debuted her breakout album, *Miss Colombia*, and today, she reemerges with *La Belleza*, a transcendent new album created in conversation with European classical music and her personal life. An iconoclast who creates music and fine art drawn from her experience as a Caribbean woman from Colombia, Lido Pimienta’s new offering marks a defining moment in her already remarkable career. “The thought of making ‘classical music’ never occurred to me before, but making experimental electronica on *Miss Colombia* was not premeditated either,” Pimienta says. “All I create is a natural evolution of my curiosity and stubbornness.”

Released in 2020, *Miss Colombia* fuses lush electronica synths with pop, resulting in an album that is as sonically captivating as it is culturally powerful. Nominated for a 2021 GRAMMY award in the Best Latin Rock or Alternative Album Category, the title was inspired by the 2015 Miss Universe mishap in which Steve Harvey mistakenly crowned Miss Colombia, instead of Miss Philippines. It caused Pimienta to reflect on the anti-blackness she’d experienced growing up. In a review broadcast on All Things Considered, *NPR* described the album as “a complicated ode to a country and a culture that still struggles to celebrate its black and Indigenous women.”

When March of 2020 hit and Pimienta was supposed to leave for tour in promotion of *Miss Colombia,* she instead found a studio space outside of Toronto and redirected her creative energy into the writing process. “*La Belleza* means *The Beauty* in Spanish, and I held on to that word fiercely—it carries so much meaning but so much emotional weight,” Pimienta explained. “Mainstream beauty has damaged my self-esteem, colorism has poisoned my people, and fatphobia refuses to go away. *La Belleza* was watching nature regenerate itself when we weren’t consuming as much. *La Belleza* was able to see and live near family again, realizing how much we had taken for granted, how fragile life was, how quickly it could be taken by a virus.”

Working with Ableton and her MIDI controller and alongside producer Owen Pallett—a fellow Polaris Prize winner and composer and arranger for the Sampha, Lana Del Rey, and the GRAMMY-nominated*Her* soundtrack, among others—Pimienta felt herself repeatedly drawn to the Luboš Fišer soundtrack for the film *Valerie and Her Week of Wonders*. Despite not being classically trained, Pimienta was excited by how this music felt like the opposite of *Miss Colombia*. “I didn’t come from a classically trained background, so this was insanely ambitious—but I also didn’t overthink it. It was COVID, and for the first time in a long time, I had time—time to learn.”

Just as she began this classical experimentation, choreographer Andrea Miller reached out to Pimienta about composing a piece of music for the New York City Ballet, becoming the first all-female team to do so. Additionally, Pimienta was the first woman of color to create a piece for the Ballet. When asked by *The New York Times* about seeing her music accompanying Miller’s choreography, Pimienta said: “It feels potent, it feels extreme — I feel an abundance. When I see the dance responding to the rhythm, the sound, the melody, it’s very emotional for me.”

Around this time Pimienta also created and debuted her six-episode season of [*LIDO TV*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SABQKzoD2NU), a variety show unique to her specific brand of humor, talent, and personality at the 2022 Toronto International Film Festival. *LIDO TV* is a surrealist feast for the senses. The show combines playful puppetry reminiscent of *Peewee’s Playhouse*, sketch comedy, soulful performances, candid interviews, and intimate documentaries. Each episode of *LIDO TV* tackles a single issue, from colonialism and privilege to feminism and hate. Collaborators on the show included Canadian metal heavyweights Kittie and Nelly Furtado, the latter of which has become a close friend. Pimienta was a writer and producer on her 2024 album *7* and appeared in the visualizer for the track “Corazón.”

These collaborative experiences built up Pimienta’s confidence and drew her deeper into the classical themes of *La Belleza*. She turned to the second century for inspiration; two direct influences were the solemn liturgical hymn Lux Aeterna, a Gregorian chant that is performed at Requiems (the mass of the dead) and sixteenth century singing of the Castrati, i.e. choirs of young boys that were castrated so that they would permanently keep their high-pitched singing voices. “If no matter what style or genre of music I make, the result will always be relegated to the World Music aisle—in stores, in the algorithm—then why not create something no one would ever expect from a Caribbean woman?” Pimienta asked. “Why not make an album that completely defies those categories? What if I made an entirely orchestral record?”

There are nine movements in *La Belleza*, with “Ahora” following the initial overture. The song honors the ceremonies and history of Pimienta’s ancestors that go untold by the mainstream. “This is what the ancestors look for/ It is a ceremony for the remains/ We honor the remains/ It is the Wayuu ceremony,” Pimienta chants in Spanish over a blood-stirring orchestral arrangement. The indigenous home of her people, the Wayuu, was called Abya Yala before European mercenaries colonized it in the 1800s and re-named it Colombia. Technically, the people were never conquered but slowly pushed out of their lands and away from natural resources. The Catholic religion was also forcefully integrated into their lives and is still dominant there to this day.

“Christopher Columbus continues to be celebrated, and Colombians don't know their story well, which is why they try to cling on to their Spaniard blood,” Pimienta says. “But despite the self-hatred and cultural confusion, the Caribbean resists. Surviving wars, dispossession of their lands and slavery, afro and indigenous peoples have maintained their culture, language and traditions.” *La Belleza* closer “Busca La Luz” trumpets the same declaration in plain terms: “Long live the Caribbean! Long live a FREE Caribbean!”

The rousing, harp-led single “Mango” also touches on these themes. ““Mango” took me back to my territory, to nature, to my people, to my village, where I watched love unfold all around me,” Pimienta says. That seed of love for her country and people became an expansive love song. “I’ve always had an aversion to writing love songs—especially if they’re about a man (insert barfing sound). But at the time, my love life was in a nebulous state: unrequited love, love from the past, love in the present—it was all I could think about. I resolved the hetero issue by keeping my love songs genderless. The sensuality is in the innuendo, in the nuance. I’m very proud of this song.”

Despite these darker themes, *La Belleza* is also exuberant, harkening back to the thrill of hearing *Miss Colombia* for the first time. “Pimienta’s soaring vocal melodies resound like sunlight breaking through the clouds,” *Rolling Stone* described her breakout album*.* *La Belleza* opens with “The Overturn,” the piece symbolizes new life and the awakening of nature—the first yawn of a flower opening, the sun rising, and the feeling of cold wet earth against our bare feet. Many of the album’s tracks— “Quiero Que Me Beses”, “Tengo Que Ir” and “¿Quién Tiene La Luz? El Perdón”—also address the separation Pimienta and her husband went through in recent years, before re-discovering their love for each other and coming back together.

On “Quiero Que Me Beses,” Pimienta “yearns for a love so intense” over a hearty string arrangement that perfectly mirrors the dynamic range of her voice. “Love me from the inside, Give me more memories/ I want you to grab me strongly, *So Strongly/* I want you to grab me, *I want you to love me*,” Pimienta sings accompanied by a chorus. “¿Quién Tiene La Luz? El Perdón” marks a moment of reconciliation. “It was a turning point for [my husband] and me,” she explained. “We started hearing each other again. After my father’s passing and the other tragedies in my life, he saw me as my most vulnerable, lost person who still needs help navigating the world. He helped me take my walls down, and we rediscovered the love we had promised each other.”

*La Belleza* encapsulates why Lido Pimienta is the artist of our moment. Unafraid to explore the depths of her creativity, she produced a haunting, invigorating album that only prompts the question: *What will come next?* Pimienta knows that this is but the next chapter in a continuous creative process. “I made a gorgeous album inspired in the beauty of being indigenous and black, about the joy of sticking my teeth into a ripe mango, about love unrequited, about ceremony and ancestry, about life and death, about transition of soul and letting go of all that makes us feel a stone has replaced our heart.”