

PRESS RELEASE

MELISSA PINTO

“Proyecto Colonia” - Album Release: October 12, 2022

After living in the Caribbean sun and sea, how does it feel to live in the cold European winter? The contradictory feelings of courage, nostalgia, euphoria, and expectation are well-known by Melissa Pinto, who released a new multi-genre production for a large ensemble. Pinto's compositions blend Colombian culture and folklore traditions, jazz, and contemporary music, making them appear in another light.

Proyecto Colonia was conceived as a new challenging project for the composer, arranger, and pianist Melissa Pinto. She left her home in Colombia to project her career as a musician in the cities of Cologne and Graz. With her third release as a leader, she has created an eclectic compilation of works full of passion and tension, synthesizing and building upon Colombia's rich music traditions through an orchestral compositional approach.

The press has categorized her style as unique and described Melissa Pinto as one of the promising young composers in the independent Colombian music scene. Her first album, "Of Na' Ma," was considered one of the best Colombian records of 2014 (Semana and Arcadia Magazines). Through the composer's music, the rhythms from the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts of Colombia are explored and fused with the language of jazz. She has composed her pieces intending to exalt and highlight the underlying elements of the musical folklore of these regions. Since 2012 Pinto has played along with her Quartet and Quintet projects with some of the most renowned Colombian and Cologne jazz musicians.

Proyecto Colonia is a collection of six works for an eleven-piece large ensemble featuring ten talented and established jazz instrumentalists based in Cologne, Melissa Pinto on piano, and renowned Colombian singers Urpi Barco and Lucía Pulido as guests. Pinto set out to compose this series of pieces taking both creative inspiration and formal patterning from her native Colombia's cultural and musical traditions and, simultaneously, from jazz, rock, and contemporary music. The results lead to a chiaroscuro album, which contrasts her previous records. Starting with a festive and colorful part, it becomes a more dense and introspective final section.

'Mi Picó,' the opening piece of this new production, is significant to the artist. In 2017 she released 'Familia Caribe,' a recording that draws attention for its exploration of 'Champeta,' an energetic urban musical genre of her hometown Cartagena whose rhythmic and harmonic particularities Colombian jazz had ignored. A distinctive genre whose origin comes from African and Caribbean rhythms reinterpreted in the urban context, a complex music heritage of the Colombian Caribbean. In 'Mi Picó,' Pinto extends that musical search to a complex aesthetic world that contains Champeta, Afrobeat, and Soukous.

The determination to arrange 'Macondo, el cuento que se llevó el viento' -the second piece of the album- composed by the singer Urpi Barco and inspired by the novel 'One hundred years of solitude' by Colombian writer Gabriel García Marquez, came from Pinto's admiration for the writer. As he lived for many years as a foreigner, she felt deeply identified with him when he said, "I have never left. One thing is to live somewhere else. But you actually leave when you uproot your life."

PERSONNEL

Julian Bossert – soprano & alt sax & flute

Victor Fox – tenor sax & clarinet

Heiko Bidmon – baritone sax & bass clarinet

Matthias Schwengler – trumpet

János Löber - trumpet

Philipp Schitteck - trombone

Philipp Brämwig – guitar

Melissa Pinto - piano

Calvin Lennig - bass

Finn Wiest - drums

Simon Bräumer – percussion

Urpi Barco – vocals on “Macondo, el cuento que se llevó el viento”

Lucía Pulido – vocals on “A ve’ a ve’”

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