

LINDI ORTEGA

Lindi Ortega gives fair warning: “Don’t come any closer to my heart /If you’re afraid of the dark.”

However, that shroud is slowly lifted in *Liberty*. As the narrative unfolds in this concept album, a central character emerges – one who finally sheds the darkness of her past and emerges into the light. As melodies and tempos change throughout *Liberty* — and its accompanying album of solo instrumentals, *Liberty: Piano Songbook* — her journey carries her steadily forward.

The melodies and arrangements of *Liberty* draw on the epic work of Oscar-winning composer Ennio Morricone, who became one of Ortega’s musical obsessions during the writing and recording of *Liberty*. Moreover, she enlisted Nashville producer Skylar Wilson (Joshua Hedley, Justin Townes Earle, Rayland Baxter) when she discovered their shared passion for Quentin Tarantino movies.

Liberty received widespread acclaim, with Pitchfork finding Ortega “celebrating her artistic freedom by showing us how an old pop-culture tradition can be made new and vibrant. NPR’s *Weekend Edition* called *Liberty* “a journey that takes you to unexpected places” — a journey Ortega unexpectedly extended with *Liberty: The Piano Songbook*.

“I didn’t feel like I was quite done with *Liberty*,” Ortega says. “I didn’t want to write a full sequel, but it needed something else. This seemed like a logical next step to take.”

Ortega and Wilson developed the concept for the *Piano Songbook*, with multi-instrumentalist Robbie Crowell (Kesha, Midland, Deer Tick), who had played with Ortega previously, recording the solo arrangements at Creative Workshops in Nashville. The fresh versions of these songs transform them, moving away from the spaghetti-Western production while maintaining a cinematic tone that musically complements the lyrical themes of *Liberty*.

“I created *Liberty* for people going through a struggle,” says Ortega, who wrote the songs out of her own vulnerabilities, including self-image issues. “I wanted to extend that with the *Piano Songbook*, and I hope it adds an extra soothing element.”