

REVIEW

Este Filo by Lourdes Perez

Reviewed by Angie Manzano

When I heard Lourdes Perez's music for the first time I could hardly believe this woman existed. An artist, a Latina lesbian political activist, and she wrote songs about all of us, for all of us. She sang about her grandmother and her country. She sang about a cross-dressing Puerto Rican woman, about the mothers of the disappeared, and about her *companera*. That was on her first CD, *Recuerdate Por Mi*, released in 1994.

With her latest release, *Este Filo*, it is clear that Lourdes Perez lives up to her reputation as one of the great Latin American singer/songwriters. Like her

previous releases, most of the music on *Este Filo* consists of Lourdes' voice accompanied by her guitar. Her songs are heavy, ripe, full. Her music is dark, but not mournful for the most part. Not dark like a funeral. *Este Filo* is dark like a warm bed in the middle of the night, whispering secrets under covers. It's dark like a barefoot midnight walk on a dirt road, a film of humid tropical night air clinging to your skin.

My favorite song on *Este Filo* is "Carrusel." On this song, she plays high-pitched guitar notes over and over, creating a gentle, sweet sound that contrasts exquisitely with her deep voice full of rolling r's, trills, and words, beautifully crafted words, spilling out like little gems. Another one of my favorites is "El Lobo y La Vera," a song that is at once playful and powerful. Then there's "Dulce Vigilante," smoky

and seductive. The songs can be urgent and dramatic, raging against violence and injustice. They can be comforting and nostalgic, memories of loved ones and promises kept. Whatever mood the music creates, it never feels forced. It seems to pour out of her so naturally, effortlessly. It draws you in and you find yourself raging, remembering, laughing and loving along with her. ○

