

Publication: **THE JAZZ BREAKFAST** (website)

Date: **16 April 2015**



Elina Duni Quartet Dallëndyshe

(ECM 470 9282)

The place where jazz and folk music meet sounds very much like the most fertile musical ground at present, if not always, and it's one which the very astute people at this German record label have been bringing to our attention for more than 40 years.

Though raised and educated in Switzerland, it was to her birth land of Albania that Elina Duni looked for her musical material rather than jazz standards. And she has been ably assisted in this venture by Swiss pianist Colin Vallon. Their relationship reminds me a little of that between Welsh pianist Huw Warren and English singer June Tobin, except that Duni is a jazz singer singing folk music rather than a folk singer singing jazz.

This is the band's second album for ECM – Patrice Moret is on double bass and Norbert Pfammatter on drums – and their empathetic playing is not only technically impeccable but also deeply felt. The material certainly deserves such complete musicianship.

Duni says this album is lighter in touch than its predecessor and explains: "One of the fascinating things about music of the Balkans, in a lot of folk music, is the idea that the pain has to be sung. And in singing you go beyond it. That's what the blues is about, of course, and you find a similar sensibility in these Albanian songs about exile and lost love."



Dallëndyshe is translated as *The Swallow*, and it's also the final track, one from the Arbëresh community, who went to Italy from the Peloponnese in the 15th century. It's a delicate duo piece from Duni and Vallon which brings this dramatic and diverse musical journey to a kind of open-ended finish. Like the best stories, it suggests there is more to come. Let's hope so for we could do with a lot more music like this.

Peter Bacon