

Elina Duni Bio

Born in 1981 into an artistic family in Tirana, Albania, during the Communist regime, Elina Duni made her first steps on the stage as a singer aged five, and she also began studying the violin. From 1986 to 1991, she participated in several youth festivals and sung for Albanian National Radio and Television.

In 1992, after the fall of the regime, she arrived in Geneva, Switzerland, with her mother. She studied the classical piano at the Conservatoire de Musique de Genève and continued her studies at the Collège de Saussure, where she discovered jazz.

In 2000, after obtaining an artistic and modern languages diploma, Elina enrolled at the University of Life! Between 2000 and 2004, she played a part in and co-wrote the music for the movie "Yllka" (Albania/Switzerland). Furthermore, she performed several jazz concerts in Albania with pianist Gent Rushi and acted in the play "Three Farces from Chekhov", directed by Spiro Duni in Tirana.

Together with José Luis "Sarten" Asaresi, she created the band "Extrangers in the Noise", with whom she released the album "Harpatic" on the Swiss independent label Empiriko, where electronic sounds was blended with the absurd sounds of life. Subsequently, she performed and sung in the play "La preuve du Contraire", directed by Freddy Porras, Geneva.

Between 2004 and 2008 she studied voice and composition on the jazz programme at the Hochschule der Künste in Bern. During this time, she formed the Elina Duni Quartet with Colin Vallon on piano, Patrice Moret on double bass and Norbert Pfammatter on drums. This represented a return to her musical roots, a combination of Balkan folk songs and jazz.

In 2007, she was the recipient of the "Friedl Wald" prize.

In 2008, the Elina Duni Quartet's first album, "Baresha", was released on Meta Records. This first musical endeavour with her quartet received great acclaim from the German and Swiss press, and was followed by European tours, as well as receiving the "Coup de Coeur du Canton de Berne 2008". In the same year, she was the recipient of the "HKB-Best-Trächsel-Stipendium-zum Berufseinstieg" prize. She sang and co-composed the music for the play "Engel", directed by Christian Probst (Bern). In 2009, she participated in the "SDJ mentoring project" with Bugge Wesseltoft for a Swiss tour, and she also received from Pro Helvetia the "Priority Jazz 2010-2012".

In 2010 the Quartet's second album, "Lume, Lume" (World, World), was released on Meta Records, and it received great acclaim from the European jazz media. As a result, the band toured in Europe and played in numerous festivals.

In 2011, French pianist and composer André Manoukian invited Elina Duni to guest on his album "Melanchology" (Universal).

In September 2012 her quartet released its debut album on ECM, "Matanë Malit" (Beyond the Mountain), a musical homage to Albania and received the Jazz Pott Prize in Essen, Germany. The

band went on to tour in Europe and the USA, and received great acclaim from the international press.

In 2014, Elina Duni released her first album as a singer-songwriter in Kosovo and Albania, entitled "Muza e Zezë" (The Black Muse).

The quartet released its second album for ECM in 2015, "Dallëndyshe" (Swallow), which was praised by the European media for its lightness as well as its subtle manner of exploring Albanian folklore.

In 2017, Elina was one of the recipients of the Swiss Music Prize and started three new projects:

A duo with the highly acclaimed London guitarist: Rob Luft

"Tribute to Billie Holiday" with pianist Jean-Paul Brodbeck

"Aksham", a quintet featuring Marc Perrenoud & David Entho

The project entitled "Partir" featuring Elina Duni as a soloist (accompanying herself on piano, acoustic guitar and percussion), will be released on record the 27th April 2018 on ECM.