

The Scotsman

Elina Duni: A Time to Remember (ECM) ****

Swiss-Albanian singer Elina Duni re-joins the quartet of her last, acclaimed release, *Lost Ships*, for another gorgeous blending of vocal and instrumental timbres. Duni imparts emotional impact while maintaining a wonderfully floating delicacy, couched in keenly sensitive accompaniments from guitarist Rob Luft, flugelhorn player Matthieu Michel and Fred Thomas on piano and drums. This is a beguiling mix of new compositions, traditional Balkan material and standards. Duni's singing in the title track reminds me of Sandy Denny in its clear, pensive drift, band shimmering behind, and undulates lissomly in two Albanian songs. The wordless vocalising of *Dawn* soars over rippling guitar and tidal cymbals, while articulation of the lovely Haden-Lincoln number, *First Song*, quivers lightly above the accompaniment, with Michel's flute-like flugelhorn and Luft's guitar taking on edge for the break. Ubiquitous but always challenging, *Send in the Clowns* is suffused with gentle, knowing regret. **Jim Gilchrist**