**ELIANE ELIAS**

**Biography**

Throughout her distinguished career, having recorded more than 25 albums as a leader, the multi-GRAMMY®-winning pianist/singer/songwriter **Eliane Elias** has consistently displayed her distinctive and immediately recognizable musical style, which blends her Brazilian roots and sensuous, alluring voice with her virtuosic instrumental jazz, classical and compositional skills.

On April 13, 2018, Elias follows up last year’s Latin GRAMMY®-winning *Dance of Time* with the all-instrumental *Music from Man of La Mancha*, via Concord Jazz*.* The album features nine individualized interpretations of songs composed by the late Mitch Leigh for the legendary 1960s Broadway musical *Man of La Mancha*.

Elias undertook the project in 1995, and it has remained unreleased until now. The recording features Elias on piano, accompanied by two different all-star trios: one featuring bassist Eddie Gomez and drummer Jack DeJohnette and the other Marc Johnson on bass and Satoshi Takeishi on drums, with Manolo Badrena joining on percussion.

“I felt intrigued when Mitch Leigh’s assistant looked for me and told me that the Tony Award-winning composer of the music of *Man of La Mancha* wanted a meeting with me in person,” writes Elias in the album’s liner notes. “When I saw him for the first time, he entered my apartment with an unlit cigar in his hand, sporting a full beard and wearing a black velveteen lounging suit, which I soon came to realize was his first choice of comfy outfits. “I immediately felt his warmth and genuine admiration for my work. He exuded the confidence of a man who knew what he wanted, and I found him to be a very ‘simpatico’ person.’ Mitch started the conversation by telling me how he loved my arrangements of Antonio Carlos Jobim’s music from the 1990 album, *Eliane Elias Plays Jobim*, and that he wanted to commission me to arrange and produce a recording of the music that he wrote for the legendary Broadway Musical, *Man of La Mancha*.”

Leigh gave Elias a CD of the original Broadway cast recording, from which she chose the songs she wanted to reimagine for *Music from Man of La Mancha*. She then set about writing the arrangements. “Mitch and I had a second meeting in my music studio,” Elias says. “With him seated on the left side of the piano, I played the first arrangement, ‘To Each His Dulcinea.’ and I was very happy to see Mitch’s excitement, his enthusiastic approval, joy and delight. Speaking from the arranger’s chair, it is the highest praise when the composer is enamored with the reimagining of his work. I was and still am grateful for the opportunity Mitch gave me to arrange his music and for the artistic freedom to present it in this way.” 

As a GRAMMY® Award winner, Latin GRAMMY® winner, four-time Gold Disc Award recipient and three-time winner of Best Vocal Album in Japan, Elias has taken her place in the pantheon of music giants. She was the #1 artist in sales and radio in France, with all of her recordings reaching the top five on the *Billboard* charts, the iTunes jazz radio charts and Amazon, to name only a few accolades.

Born in Sao Paulo, Brazil, Elias’ musical talents began to show at an early age. She started studying piano at age seven and at age 12 was transcribing solos from the great jazz masters. By the time she was 15, she was teaching piano and improvisation at one of Brazil’s most prestigious schools of music. Her performing career began in Brazil at age 17, working with Brazilian singer/songwriter Toquinho and the great poet Vinicius de Moraes, who was also Antonio Carlos Jobim’s co-writer/lyricist. In 1981, she headed for New York and in 1982 landed a spot in the acclaimed group Steps Ahead.

Her first album release was a collaboration with Randy Brecker in 1984 entitled *Amanda*. Shortly thereafter her solo career began, spanning 26 albums to date with the release of *Music from Man of La Mancha*. In her work Elias has documented dozens of her own compositions, her outstanding piano playing and arranging and beautiful vocal interpretations. In 1988, she was voted Best New Talent in *Jazziz* magazine’s Critics Poll.

Together with Herbie Hancock, she was nominated for a GRAMMY® in the Best Jazz Solo Performance category for her 1995 release *Solos and Duets*. This recording was hailed by *Musician* magazine as “a landmark in piano duo history.” In the 1997 *DownBeat* Readers Poll, her recording *The Three Americas* was voted Best Jazz Album. Elias was also named in five other categories: Beyond Musician, Best Composer, Jazz Pianist, Female Vocalist and Musician of the Year. Considered one of the great interpreters of Jobim’s music, Elias has recorded two albums solely dedicated to the works of the composer: *Plays Jobim* and *Sings Jobim*. Her 1998 release *Eliane Elias Sings Jobim* won Best Vocal Album in Japan, was the number one record on Japan’s charts for over three months and was awarded Best Brazilian Album in the *Jazziz* Critics Poll.

Moreover, as a testament to the quality of her writing, the renowned Danish Radio Big Band has performed and recorded Elias’ compositions, arranged and conducted by the legendary Bob Brookmeyer. The CD recording of this project, entitled *Impulsive*,was released on Stunt Records. It received a GRAMMY® nomination for Best Large Jazz Ensemble Album in 2001. The same year, *Calle 54*, the highly acclaimed documentary film by Oscar-winning Spanish director Fernando Trueba, featured Elias’ performance of “Samba Triste” and also received a GRAMMY® nomination for Best Latin Jazz Album.

*On the Classical Side*, recorded in 1993, demonstrated Elias’ classical skills with a program of Bach, Ravel and Villa Lobos. In 2002, Elias recorded with opera sensation Denyce Graves. For this recording, *The Lost Days*, she arranged two Brazilian classical pieces and wrote an original composition especially for Graves titled “Haabiá-Tupi.”

In 2002, Elias signed to the RCA Music Group/Bluebird label and released *Kissed by Nature,* an album consisting of mostly original compositions. *Dreamer*, her second recording for the label (released in 2004), was a fresh mix of tunes from the Great American Songbook, Brazilian bossa novas and two new originals, all sung in English and Portuguese and supported by a full orchestra. *Dreamer* received the Gold Disc Award and was voted Best Vocal Album in Japan in 2004. It reached number 3 on the pop charts in France and number 4 on the *Billboard* charts in the U.S. Elias’ *Around the City*, released on RCA Victor in August 2006, merges bits of bossa nova with shades of pop, jazz, Latin and even rock ’n’ roll. *Around the City* features Elias’ vocals and songwriting in collaborations with producers Andres Levin and Lester Mendez, as well as fresh takes on pop classics such as Tito Puente’s “Oye Como Va” and Bob Marley’s “Jammin’.”

Elias returned to Blue Note/EMI in 2007 with *Something for You,* a tribute to the music of the late, great Bill Evans. While touching the essence of the pianist/composer, she also brings her own unique gifts to the surface, as a composer, interpreter, outstanding instrumentalist and beguiling vocalist. This release won Best Vocal Album of the Year and the Gold Disc Award in Japan. This is also the third consecutive recording of Elias to receive these awards and her fourth overall. *Something for You* reached number 1 on the U.S. Jazz Radio charts, number 8 on *Billboard* and number 2 on the French jazz charts.

2008 marked the 50th anniversary of the birth of bossa nova. In celebration of this event, Elias recorded *Bossa Nova Stories*, featuring some of the landmark songs of Brazil with American classic and pop standards, exquisitely performed as only she can, with lush romantic vocals and exciting playing accompanied by a stellar rhythm section and strings recorded at Abbey Road Studios in London.

Destined to become a classic, *Bossa Nova Stories* achieved the following: number 1 debut on the French charts (2008), number 1 Vocal Album from *Swing Journal* in Japan (May-June 2008), number 1 iTunes Top Jazz Album (January 2009), number iTunes Top Latin Album (January 2009) and number 2 debut on *Billboard*’s Overall and Top Jazz Charts (January 2009). *Bossa Nova Stories* was also nominated by the Brazilian GRAMMYs (20th Prêmio da Música Brasileira, 2009) for Best Foreign Album.

In 2009, EMI Japan released *Eliane Elias Plays Live*, an all-instrumental trio album with bassist Marc Johnson and drummer Joey Baron of a concert recorded in Amsterdam on May 31, 2002. This performance demonstrates modern jazz trio playing at the highest level and spotlights Elias’ inventiveness and command of the instrument on a collection of jazz standards and one original.

*Light My Fire*, released May 31, 2011, on Concord Picante, a division of Concord Music Group, featured four compositions written or co-written by Elias herself and also included covers of familiar works by songwriters as diverse as Jim Morrison and the Doors, pop icon Stevie Wonder and jazz saxophonist Paul Desmond. Backing Elias was a crew of 12 high-caliber players, including guitarist/vocalist Gilberto Gil and trumpeter Randy Brecker. On *Light My Fire*, Elias wore many hats—as singer, pianist, composer, arranger and producer. In September 2011, her song “What About the Heart (Bate Bate)” was nominated for a Latin GRAMMY® in the category of Best Brazilian Song.

On May 28, 2013, Concord Jazz presented Elias’ *I Thought About You (A Tribute to Chet Baker)*, an album that offered her personalized spin on the work of a key American jazz artist while spotlighting her connection to the singer-instrumentalist tradition.

Long known for her native feel of Brazilian music, *I Thought About You* truly confirmed Elias’ expertise as an interpreter of American standards. In addition to receiving glowing critical praise, *I Thought About You* reached number 1 album in the U.S. and France in sales on Amazon.com, number 2 on iTunes in several countries including the U.S., France and Brazil, number 4 on *Billboard*’s jazz charts and top jazz radio charts.

*Made in Brazil*, released on March 31, 2015, on Concord Jazz, marked a musical homecoming for Elias. In her long career as a solo artist, it results from the first time she’s recorded a disc in her native Brazil since moving to the United States in 1981. On February 15, 2016, *Made in Brazil* was awarded a GRAMMY® in the category of Best Latin Jazz Album. *Dance of Time*, which debuted at number 1 on two *Billboard* charts, the iTunes Jazz Albums chart and the Amazon.com Brazilian and Latin Jazz charts, was also recorded in Elias’ homeland. The album took home a Latin GRAMMY for Best Latin Jazz/Jazz Album.

Demonstrating her unique gifts as a pianist, singer, composer and arranger as well as melding her immense talents in jazz, pop, classical and Brazilian music, Eliane Elias is, as *Jazziz* magazine has called her, “a citizen of the world” and “an artist beyond category.”