

ELIANE ELIAS Biography

GRAMMY®-winning pianist/singer/songwriter **Eliane Elias** is known for 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.

Two years after seducing fans with her GRAMMY®-winning *Made in Brazil* (Best Latin Jazz Album), Elias returns with the ebullient *Dance of Time*, set for release on March 24, 2017 via Concord Jazz.

Dance of Time, like its predecessor, was recorded in Brazil. “Recording in Brazil was such a high,” explains Elias as to why she returned to the country. But thematically, *Dance of Time* is its own beautiful beast. Whereas *Made in Brazil* was a tantalizing toast to three generations of Brazilian composers, *Dance of Time*’s themes are multifold.

With the presence of extraordinary guests including pianist Amilton Godoy plus singer-songwriting guitarists João Bosco and Toquinho—from Brazil—along with trumpeter Randy Brecker, vibraphonist Mike Mainieri and singer Mark Kibble—from the United States, *Dance of Time* celebrates certain people who were integral in Elias’ early artistic journey in both Brazil and the U.S. “I wanted to include musicians who were very important in the start of my career,” Elias says. “*Dance of Time* represents the spectrum of my career from the very beginning until now.”

Dance of Time also applauds the samba, a genre originating from Bahia, via Africa. Last year marked the 100th anniversary of the first samba ever recorded and registered, “Pelo Telefone.” “Samba is the most authentic and contagious dance rhythm of Brazil, and there is no better place in the world to capture this music. I just had to be in Brazil to make *Dance of Time*.”

As a GRAMMY® Award 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 twelve was transcribing solos from the great jazz masters. By the time she was fifteen, she was teaching piano and improvisation at one of Brazil’s most prestigious schools of music. Her performing career began in Brazil at age seventeen, 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 over twenty-two albums to date. 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 entitled "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 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 No. 3 on the pop charts in France and No. 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 & 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 No. 1 on the U.S. Jazz Radio charts, No. 8 on *Billboard* and No. 2 on the French jazz charts.

2008 marked the fiftieth 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: No. 1 debut on the French charts (2008), No. 1 Vocal Album from *Swing Journal* in Japan (May-June 2008), No. 1 iTunes Top Jazz Album (January 2009), No. 2 iTunes Top Latin Album (January 2009) and No. 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's 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 twelve 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 #1 album in the U.S. and France in sales on Amazon.com, #2 on iTunes in several countries including the U.S., France and Brazil, #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.

Elias again wore many hats on this project as producer, composer, lyricist, arranger, pianist and vocalist. Along with co-producers Steve Rodby and Marc Johnson, the latter her bass-playing musical partner, Elias ventured ‘home’ and recruited a splendid cast of Brazilian musicians that included electric bassist Marcelo Mariano; guitarists Marcus Teixeira and Roberto Menescal; drummers Edu Ribeiro and Rafael Barata; and percussionists Mauro Refosco and Marivaldo dos Santos.

Elias peppered the sessions with delightful special guest performances from Mark Kibble and the multi-GRAMMY® Award winning Gospel vocal group Take 6, her singer/songwriter-daughter Amanda Brecker—one of Brazil's most celebrated R&B stars, Ed Motta and renowned bossa nova composer Roberto Menescal. Elias also invited Rob Mathes to handle orchestral arrangements on seven of the 12 tracks, which were recorded in London at the legendary Abbey Road studios.

Made in Brazil contained six Elias originals plus two Ary Barroso standards, two Roberto Menescal chestnuts, and two Antonio Carlos Jobim world-renowned gems. Elias, who did all the arrangements for the basic tracks, said that she purposely wanted *Made in Brazil* to incorporate three generations of Brazilian composers.

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, she is as *Jazziz* magazine has called her, “A citizen of the world” and “an artist beyond category.”