**ELIANE ELIAS**

***MIRROR MIRROR***

***Chick Corea Chucho Valdés***

Multi GRAMMY® winning pianist/singer/composer Eliane Elias’ latest album ***MIRROR MIRROR*** on Candid Records is a lifelong musical dream come true—an extraordinary piano duet recording of Eliane with the late legendary jazz great Chick Corea, and famed Cuban pianist Chucho Valdés. While her highly successful recordings have predominantly featured her alluring voice and piano mastery, the piano has always been her first love and working with these two incredible icons was a rare opportunity to record in a two-piano setting, something she hasn’t done in many years.

For the world-renowned performer, this organically created collection represents more than simply a culmination of an illustrious career that includes nearly 30 recordings, over 2.3 million albums sold, nine total GRAMMY and Latin GRAMMY nominations, a GRAMMY win for Best Latin Jazz Album (*Made in Brazil*, 2016) and a Latin GRAMMY win for Best Latin Jazz/Jazz Album (*Dance of Time,* 2017). ***MIRROR MIRROR*** marks the classically trained pianist’s first piano-only recording since 1995’s *Solos and Duets*, a set of piano solos and six duets with pianist Herbie Hancock.

The recordings took place in NYC at Yamaha’s Artist Services in Manhattan with Corea and Brooklyn’s Bunker Studios with Valdés. It features Chick on four tracks, Chucho on three and was produced by Elias with her award-winning team of co-producers Marc Johnson and Steve Rodby, and mixed and mastered by Rich Breen. Though Corea and Valdés alternate in the track list with the opening Corea duet “Armando’s Rhumba” followed by the Valdés duet “Esta Tarde Vi Llover” before the next Corea duo “Blue Bossa,” etc., the flow is remarkably seamless – but the story behind the recording of the album is best told in two distinct segments.

Having always counted Corea as one of her chief influences, Eliane first met him in 1978 in Brazil. Meeting on occasion over the years on the road they spoke of someday playing or recording together. Having at last set aside a date to do so, by design the two’s sole literal preparation was about song suggestions. In Eliane’s view, she and Chick had been getting ready for their session with lifetimes dedicated to their craft, their instruments and the art of improvisation.

“Despite him being a generation older, our influences were similar; Bud Powell, Bill Evans, in fact, we had both done tributes to Evans. We also played with many of the same bassists and drummers and, of course both were rooted in classical training. He played Mozart and Scarlatti, I played Bach and Ravel. Those shared influences poured out as we played and one can feel our affinities through the inventiveness of the rhythms and harmonies, how we felt time with each other and how we treated the songs.”

When he passed unexpectedly in February 2021, Elias, devastated, was deep in the mixing process with four improvisational duets she had recorded with him. Revisiting the music for release reminded her just how effortlessly they communicated and of the instant rapport they shared.

You can discern the duo’s chemistry from the elegant opening of “Armando’s Rhumba”~~.~~ Ditto the opening sensitive lyrical approach and hypnotic intertwining of notes that drives “Blue Bossa”. The other tracks are the title track “Mirror Mirror” and “There Will Never Be Another You,” the title of which captures what words are insufficient to describe; the beautiful moments Eliane and Chick created in tandem.

In contemplating who she would like to work with to complete a piano duets album, the idea of playing with Valdés came quickly to mind, and Eliane describes the sessions as spontaneous, full of heart, passion, and energy – and just as importantly, another dream fulfilled. She and Valdés ran into each other at festivals and other venues over the years, and have a deep affection for each other’s playing. Before they started recording at their Model D Steinway and Sons pianos, they had a brief meeting in Miami to go over song choices. Valdés was enthusiastic about her unique suggestions of tunes by Mexican and Spanish composers. He knew the songs but was surprised she did – until Eliane told him about her mother Lucy, the daughter of a Spanish Basque who exposed her to countless Spanish language and Latin songs in addition to her extensive jazz collection. They looked over Eliane’s charts in a fun afternoon of playing together, so that when they arrived at the studio a few days later, the only question was, “Do you solo first or do I?

Eliane and Chucho create an intoxicating mix of Cuban and Brazilian rhythms throughout their three tunes, from the elegantly romantic –– “Esta Tarde Vi Llover” to the mood-swinging ”Corazon Partío” and “Sabor a Mi,” a sensual bolero which begins introspectively, then evolves into a percussive jam. “The give and take, the way I accompanied him and he accompanied me, and how we answered each other reflects how completely connected we were,” Eliane says.

Born in São Paulo, Brazil, Eliane began her classical piano studies at age seven and at twelve was transcribing solos from the great jazz masters. By 15, she was teaching piano and improvisation at one of Brazil’s most prestigious schools of music.  Her performing career began two years later, working with Brazilian singer/songwriter Toquinho and the great poet Vinicius de Moraes, who was also Antonio Carlos Jobim’s co-writer/lyricist. Later in NYC, after performing for several years with Steps Ahead and recording on their self-titled second album (also featuring Michael Brecker, Michael Mainieri, Peter Erskine and Eddie Gomez), she launched her solo career in 1984 with a collaboration album with Randy Brecker titled *Amanda*.

Eliane’s first official album under her own name, *Illusions*, featured Stanley Clarke, Steve Gadd, Lenny White, Eddie Gomez and Toots Thielemans and hit #1 on the Radio & Records Contemporary Jazz chart. Voted Best New Talent in the Jazziz magazine critics’ poll in 1988, Eliane is a four-time Gold Disc Award recipient, a three-time Best Vocal Album winner in Japan and winner of the 2018 Edison Lifetime Achievement Award in Holland. Her 2019 album *Love Stories* was voted “Downbeat’s Best Album of 2019- Masterpiece” and as most of her previous releases, hit #1 on the jazz charts worldwide.

“The title ***MIRROR MIRROR***wasn’t chosen simply because it was one of the songs Chick and I recorded,” says Eliane. “It was all about the two pianos facing each other like a beautiful mirror image, and how in each duet we reflected each other’s thoughts and ideas back and forth. To me, the piano is an extension of my body, heart and soul and is at the center of everything I do. I will always be proud and grateful for the opportunity to have registered these special musical encounters with these two master musicians.”

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“Elias’ intoxicating vocals emote the ambient calm of a forest after a soft rain; her vibrancy is a force unto itself. With powerful artistry, her naturally prodigious talent is even stronger as the years pass—a feat capable only by the true elites of the musical world.” \*\*\*\*\* ***– DownBeat***

“The Brazilian pianist and singer Eliane Elias commands the keyboard with a forceful two-handed muscularity that belies her image as a blond older sister of the mythical Girl From Ipanema. The more percussive her pianism becomes, the more she opens up a song and reimagines it in what might be called a romantic carnival groove.. …a celebration of the vitality of a culture overflowing with life and natural beauty.” ***– The New York Times***

“Eliane Elias is of a generation of aggressive pianists who attack music like a lioness attacking its prey, at the same time expressing a tenderness within the core of her passion that at times has brought me to tears.” **-- *Herbie Hancock***