

Hailed by *JazzTimes* for his “agility and clean, clarion, powerful sound,” saxophonist and composer Shauli Einav is a wide-ranging musician whose artistry is rooted in a search for truth. That philosophy has guided him throughout a venturesome career that has included performances and recordings with such leading jazz figures as Aaron Goldberg, David Liebman, Gilad Hekselman, Avishai Cohen, Johnathan Blake, Shai Maestro, Walt Weiskopf and Tigran Hamasyan, among others.

On his latest release, *Living Organs* (Outside In Music), Einav’s ongoing quest has resulted in a thrilling album that looks simultaneously back at the saxophonist’s own musical roots and daringly forward with a bold new electric quartet. Like the organs of the human body, Einav’s group – featuring guitarist Eran Har Even, organist Laurent Coulondre and drummer Paul Wiltgen – operates on the synergistic principle of vital individual components that work together to conjure the spark of life. The album revels in the fact that “tradition” can be traced along diverse, eclectic and multi-faceted paths, melding Einav’s jazz roots with the groove-oriented pop and rock music of his youth.

Born in the Israeli countryside, Einav went on to study in New York and spend several years on the Paris jazz scene before settling in his current home of Luxembourg. Raised in a musical family, he grew up taking violin lessons before experimenting with drums and piano before discovering his passion for the saxophone. Einav’s interest in jazz was fueled by regular visits with his amateur pianist father to Israel’s Red Sea Jazz Festival, where he was enraptured by many of the music’s greatest practitioners. (George Coleman was an early and enduring influence that Einav initially encountered at the festival.)

While studying at the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance, Einav was discovered by Arnie Lawrence, the Brooklyn-born co-founder of the New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music, who had relocated to Jerusalem to help bridge the Israeli-Palestinian divide through music education. The encounter proved pivotal, as Einav recalls: “Arnie was a larger than life figure for so many of us. The one thing he always insisted that he wanted to hear was the truth, whether you were playing one note or a bunch of complex phrases.”

Einav moved to New York to earn his Master’s degree at the prestigious Eastman School of Music in Rochester. In Manhattan he became a regular presence on the West Village scene based at the thriving clubs Smalls and Fat Cat, out of which emerged his 2011 debut, *Opus One* (Plus Loin Music). The album, praised by *DownBeat* as “smartly played, swinging and evocative.” featured several of his regular collaborators from the period, including drummer Johnathan Blake, bassist Joseph Lepore, trombonist Andy Hunter and pianist Shai Maestro, a friend since their teenage years in Israel.

*A Truth About Me* (Cristal Records) followed in 2013, depicting Einav’s move to Paris through the wanderlust of titles like “The Traveller,” “Nomads,” and “Embarcadère.” Hunter returned on trombone, alongside new bandmates Antonin Tri Hoang (alto sax and bass clarinet), Paul Lay (piano), Florent Nisse (bass) and Louis Moutin (drums). Most importantly, it introduced the concept of self-exploratory honesty that is the throughline to so much of the saxophonist’s work.

Later the same year Einav released *Generations* (Posi-Tone), which traced his musical lineage back to foundational jazz icons like John Coltrane, Don Byas, Andrew Hill and Harold Land. The album featured flutist Itai Kriss, bassist Or Bareket, drummer Eliot Zigmund and the late pianist Don Friedman. 2016's *Beam Me Up* (Berthold) returned to Einav's France-based quartet with Lay, Nisse and drummer Gautier Garrigue.

Following his move to Luxembourg with his family, Einav launched a new quintet in 2019 with *Animi* (Berthold), called by *DownBeat*, "an exercise in smartly arranged group interplay." The unique line-up departed from the traditional soloist-and-rhythm-section format with a group featuring established French, Israeli, American and Algerian artists: Andy Hunter once again on trombone, vibraphonist Tim Collins, bassist Jonathan Zelnik and drummer Guilhem Flouzat. With *Living Organs* Einav has taken yet another unexpected turn on this lifelong path, one that is both a leap forward and a full circle return to his earliest musical memories.

As noted by All About Jazz, "Shauli Einav is a remarkably complete musician, a virtuosic soloist with a lush sound on both soprano and tenor whose compositions are daring and deep." Those facets, propelled by his deep-seeded quest to expression an ever-evolving personal truth through his music, combine to make Einav one of the most compelling and searching saxophonists in jazz today.