

Saxophonist/composer Shauli Einav debuts a thrilling electric quartet on his stunning new album, *Living Organs*

Due out November 18, 2023 via Outside In Music (Europe), the adventurous album features guitarist Eran Har Even, organist Laurent Coulondre and drummer Paul Wiltgen

Each organ in the human body serves its own vital role, on its own indispensable to the functioning of the whole; but life only truly becomes miraculous when all of these components work together. On his new release, *Living Organs*, saxophonist/composer **Shauli Einav** debuts a new quartet that operates on the same synergistic principle. The album, due out **November 18, 2023** on the newly launched **Outside In Music Europe**, conjures a scintillatingly original sound from the chemistry of four distinctive individuals.

“In this band, each part is a vital one and has a very unique individual role,” Einav says. “I feel like we're four soloists playing together, and because of that I'm being fed ideas more than ever before.”

Like Einav, whose path has led from his native Israel through New York and Paris before settling in Luxembourg, the new quartet comprises a global and nomadic cast. Guitarist and bassist **Eran Har Even** relocated from Israel to Amsterdam, where he's now an active member of the Dutch jazz scene as well as an educator on faculty at the Conservatory of Amsterdam. Organist and keyboardist **Laurent Coulondre** hails from Nimes, France and is now based in Paris, though he discovered his passion for the organ while studying in Catalonia. Drummer **Paul Wiltgen** is a Luxembourg native, though he studied at Manhattan School of Music and worked with the likes of David Binney, Ambrose Akinmusire and Kurt Rosenwinkel during his years in New York City.

Beyond its more metaphorical meaning, *Living Organs* is a play on the concept of the jazz organ group, hinting at the fact that this is a more modern, evolving take on the form. The album represents a turn towards a more electric, groove-based approach for Einav, whose past releases have mined a more acoustic, swing-rooted vein. The eclectic and propulsive sound acknowledges that his love of jazz grew not in a vacuum, but amid an equal zeal for contemporary rock and pop music.

“I got my first Charlie Parker album when I was ten, but even before that I used to listen to a lot of Jamiroquai, Queen and David Bowie,” the saxophonist recalls. “My older brother and sister would bring home cassettes by Megadeth or Iron Maiden, Duran Duran or Tracy Chapman. The things that you hear at the age of eight or nine stick with you, so for this album I just wrote music that I thought that I wanted to hear. The most important thing for me is always to be honest to myself.”

The music's direct connection to Einav's childhood reveals an even deeper meaning to the *Living Organs* title, one that references the vital role that music itself has played in the saxophonist's life. Though his siblings' musical tastes left lasting impressions, so did

their absence from the family home during much of Einav's adolescence – his brother at a boarding school, his sister practicing for endless hours at an elite dance school. Einav later found himself at the same boarding school; at the same time, his country was suffering the upheavals of terror attacks. In all cases, music proved to be an essential release valve.

“In Israel at that time, each one of us found our own way out,” Einav recalls. “For me, jazz was escapism.”

Living Organs opens with the bristling fanfare of “A La Yustor,” a dramatic kick-off that then settles into a funky, insinuating shuffle. The title is a twist on “Allah Yustor,” an Arabic phrase that roughly translates as “God protect” or “God forbid” – in short, an instinctive reaction to unexpected news. A glistening, slinky groove tune, “Vyana,” which layers Einav's tenor and alto saxes and flute, takes its name from one of the subdivisions of prana, the life force of yoga. The title is a nod the inspiration of trumpet legend Tom Harrell, whose 2009 album *Prana Dance* proved influential on Einav's compositional thinking for his new band.

The lush “Screech” pays homage to another formative influence, the great Brazilian composer Milton Nascimento, whose multi-hued palette obviously made a distinct impression on Einav; “Joe's Shade,” meanwhile is the album's sole exercise in swing, a bustling tip of the hat to tenor titan Joe Henderson. The saxophonist begins “Into My Dream” with a spoken dedication to one of his chief mentors, the late saxophonist and New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music co-founder Arnie Lawrence.

“Arnie was a larger than life figure for so many of us,” Einav says. “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.”

The joyous “New Life” celebrates the birth of Einav's second child, while the strutting “West 4” reflects on Einav's days in New York, spending late nights at Smalls Jazz Club in the West Village and encountering the full spectrum of humanity on the after-hours stroll home. “Astro” is a mesmerizing, atmospheric piece built on a pulsating bass ostinato, and the equally kaleidoscopic “Hypnagogia,” originally recorded by Medura, his duo with French accordionist Christophe Girard. An entrancing epilogue to the album, the piece approximates the liminal terrain between sleep and waking.

As its name suggests, *Living Organs* is an album bursting with life, a thrillingly modern jazz session that revels in the fact that “tradition” can be traced along diverse, wide-roaming and multi-faceted paths. Shauli Einav has followed a singular path on a search for truth, leading to stunningly honest musical discoveries.