

LILI AÑEL BIOGRAPHY

Lili Añel considers music a calling. This striking six-foot tall singer-songwriter-musician grew up in New York City's Spanish Harlem, where she discovered her passion for music. As a child, Lili remembers singing along to her mother's Cuban, jazz and pop-standard albums. It was also her mother who supported Lili's desire to join the church choir. However, it was her Afro-Cuban grandfather's recognition of how much joy her singing brought others, being the voice that stood out in that choir, which served to set her feet firmly on the path of a career in music.

After establishing a music career and a large following in New York in the vibrant 1980s Greenwich Village singer-songwriter scene, she relocated to Philadelphia in 2004. It was from her new home base where she continued to move audiences with her songs, now more jazz-inspired, highlighting themes reflecting her hope for the future, standing in her truth of life's difficulties and conjuring the strength for perseverance. All delivered with that unique voice, alternating between low reaches one feels in their center and a sweeter, more vulnerable falsetto.

"Think Joan Armatrading, Joni Mitchell and Nina Simone all rolled into one...blurs the lines between Jazz, Folk and intelligent Pop... strong and heartfelt." - **Ken Franckling's Jazz Notes**

While receiving airplay from radio stations across the country, Lili has been especially embraced by her adopted hometown of Philadelphia's WRTI 90.1 FM, which has included her in its **NPR Live Sessions From Home**, a series of artist-produced video performances created during the Covid pandemic.

Always defying rigid categorization, Lili's music has been called a hybrid of jazz/folk/soul/pop always propelled by her powerful vocal stylings, guitar playing and songs that often recall her eclectic influences, all merging seamlessly. "I am a sum of many parts ethnically, and my music reflects this," she says. "I have many influences, but I am totally me. When I am asked, 'What kind of music do you play?' my response is always 'I play Lili music.'"

Lili studied voice and performance at City College's Leonard Davis Center of Performing Arts, which included a year of study with Jazz vocal great **Sheila Jordan**. She would later attend classes at Eddie Simon's Guitar Study Center. Only able to afford one class, she would audit as many other classes as possible each semester, eventually gaining the respect of her instructors who admired her rigor and talent, allowing her to participate in class as if fully enrolled. She began attending open-mic nights, which led to her putting a band together and building a following, leading to the creation of her first record, 1994's ***Laughed Last***, on Palmetto Records.

Taken under the wing of jazz superstar Cassandra Wilson, Lili soon shared bills with Madeleine Peyroux, Boz Scaggs, B.B. King, Peabo Bryson and Raul Midon, to name a few, along with being invited to perform a co-bill with Cassandra Wilson at her venue. ***Laughed Last*** (1994) was followed by ***Hi-Octane Coffee*** (2002), ***Dream Again*** (2007), ***Every Second In Between*** (2009), all self-released. In 2007, *JazzTimes Magazine* said of Lili, "...her songs are consistently excellent..." and proclaimed of her 2009 release "...a CD to blow your mind at first listen...". ***Every Second In Between*** (produced by Glenn Barratt) also made the All About Jazz 2009 Year End Writers Choice for the "10 Best New Jazz Releases" list, along with winning 3 New York

Music Awards in 2010 for Best Singer-Songwriter, Best Jazz Album and Best Female Jazz Vocalist. 2013 saw her release *I Can See Bliss From Here*, followed by 2017's *Another Place, Another Time*, each receiving critical acclaim. Both recordings were released under Cassandra Wilson's "Ojah Media Group", with Lili being invited to perform at Wilson's venue "The Yellow Scarf" in a co-bill with her.

Better Days (Remastered), released October 2021, was a re-imagining of Lili's October 2019 album *Better Days*. As a result of the pandemic, the record never had a real chance to be heard or supported by live performances. This time, Lili's co-producer Dale Melton was able to revisit it with fresh ears, adding two additional remastered tracks, one of which is a stunning live version of "Got Me Thinking," recorded at WRTI. The other bonus track, "Climb the Wall," is one of Lili's most compelling songs from her 2013 album *I Can See Bliss From Here*. In its remastered form, the song sits perfectly with *Better Days (Remastered)*.

Lili recently co-wrote a song for the award-winning play **Folk City: The Greenwich Village Musical**. The track, "Lovers Leap," (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sCQzP-fQkLs>) has become a standout on the recently released cast album and was entered for several Grammy categories. The song will be included in the upcoming film adaptation of the play, directed by Venice Film Festival Award-winning director Jane Spencer.

Over all these years, Lili has performed to standing ovations from sold-out crowds in clubs to concert halls. And now, she has her ninth album, *You Have a Visitor*, ready for release in February 3, 2025. Stepping aside from a full band, this is Lili at her most intimate, in a guitar/acoustic bass/drums-percussion trio setting. It is also her first time as a producer. With songs showing her wide range of influences, included are the free-form, Gil Scott Heron-inspired "I Saw the Light"; the jazzy, whimsical "Fairy Tales"; cinematic song of resignation and acceptance "Anymore"; and the African-roots folk track "Gone the Other Way." ("Lovers Leap" is also featured as a bonus track.) And, of course, there is that incomparable voice anchoring this highly anticipated, multiple-style-spanning release.

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For Additional Information

(Physical CD Copy, JPGS, Download link)

Contact: info@lilianel.org

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Links:

Performance:

NPR Live Sessions from Home - <https://livesessions.npr.org/videos/lili-anel-climb-the-wall>

NPR Live Sessions <https://livesessions.npr.org/videos/lili-anel-another-place-another-time>

NPR Live Sessions <https://livesessions.npr.org/videos/lili-anel-traffic-jam-in-a-one-horse-town>

Print:

2/11/2025 - [Lili Añel-Aldora Britain Records Interview.pdf](#)

9/10/2021 Interview: <https://carolbanksweber.medium.com/as-promised-lili-anel-unplugged-the-post-covid-interview-89451645dc32>