



# Lucian Ban

piano | composer | arranger

[www.lucianban.com](http://www.lucianban.com)

Called “A name to watch” by The Guardian and “one of the most gifted pianists to move to New York” (B. Gallanter, Downtown Music Gallery), **Lucian Ban** is a NYC based pianist & composer working at the forefront of contemporary jazz. Known for his amalgamations of Transylvanian folk with improvisation, for his mining of 20<sup>th</sup> Century European classical music with jazz, and for his pursue of a modern chamber jazz ideal his music has been described as “emotionally ravishing” (Nate Chinen, NYT/WBGO), a “triumph of emotional and musical communication” (All About Jazz), “Unorthodox but mesmerizingly beautiful” (The Guardian) and as holding an “alluring timelessness and strong life-force” (Downbeat).

Lucian Ban (b 1969, Cluj, Romania) was raised in a small village in northwest Transylvania, in “the region where Bartok did his most extensive research and collecting of folk songs” and grew up listening to both traditional and classical music. He studied composition at the Bucharest Music Academy with classical composer Anatol Vieru while simultaneously leading his own jazz groups, and notes that his approach to improvisation has been influenced by “the profound musical contributions of Romanian modern classical composers like Aurel Stroe, Anatol Vieru and of course Enesco”. Desire to get closer to the source of jazz brought him to the US, and since moving from Romania to New York in 1999 his ensembles have included some of today’s most celebrated jazz musicians. His compositions are performed and recorded by several ensembles and he has released 18 albums under his name for labels such as ECM Records, Sunnyside, Clean Feed, CIMP, Jazzaway, all the while maintaining a worldwide touring schedule.

His **Enesco Re-Imagined** Octet co-lead with bassist **John Hébert** and featuring an A-list of creative musicians (*Ralph Alessi, Tony Malaby, Badal Roy, Gerald Cleaver, Mat Maneri, Albrecht Maurer*) has re-envisioned the music of his fellow countryman, 20<sup>th</sup> century classical composer George Enescu through improvisation & contemporary jazz. Released to critical acclaim by Sunnyside records **Enesco Re-Imagined** has won multiple 2010 BEST ALBUM OF THE YEAR awards and performances on both sides of the Atlantic. Press described it as “a spectacular dreamy affair” (All About Jazz) “Sparkling new album”, (New York Times), “dazzling thematic writing” (The Guardian). Jazz Times says “*Enesco Re-Imagined is visionary third-stream music . . . this recording places Ban and Hébert among the great 21<sup>st</sup> Century interpreters.*”

In 2013 Lucian Ban releases **Transylvanian Concert** with violist **Mat Maneri** for the prestigious German label **ECM Records**. Informed by the twin traditions of American jazz and European chamber & folk music the album wins critical press acclaim and several BEST ALBUM OF THE YEAR sparking continuous touring throughout the world. Jazz Times calls it “As close as it gets to Goth-jazz”, The New York Times talks about “enfolded mystery”, The Guardian notes its “own kind of melancholy beauty and wayward exuberance”, and All About Jazz hails its “unanticipated beauty”.

Lucian Ban musical partnership with Mat Maneri continues with **Fantasm** (Nemu Records 2015) a cutting edge chamber trio featuring German violinist **Albrecht Maurer** called “a masterwork of mood and nuance, one of the highlights of 2015” (Point of Departure) and in 2017 Mat Maneri & Lucian Ban team up with legendary UK saxophonist **Evan Parker** to release **Sounding Tears** for Clean Feed records named a BEST ALBUM OF 2017 by *Giornale della Musica* (Italy), a “one of a kind experience” (Jazz Trail), “an emotionally ravishing piece of music” (WBGO), and “among the most beautiful recordings released in 2017” (NYC Jazz Record). In 2018 Lucian Ban and Mat Maneri premiere at Lyon Opera **Oedipe Redux** a radical rewriting of George Enescu Oedipe opera featuring Jen Shyu, Theo Bleckmann, John Hebert, Ralph Alessi, Tom Rainey and the French bass clarinet virtuoso Louis Sclavis.

In 2006 he establishes the **ELEVATION** quartet with saxophonist extraordinaire **Abraham Burton** and the acclaimed rhythm section of **John Hébert** (bass) and **Eric McPherson** (drums). Their 1<sup>st</sup> album **Mystery** (Sunnyside 2013) documents a blistering live performance in New York City and was named BEST ALBUM OF 2013 by Elzy Kolb (Hot House), Jeff Stockton (NYC Jazz Record), and Ken Micaleff (Downbeat). The follow up album **Songs from Afar** (Sunnyside 2016) with special guest Transylvanian traditional singer Gavril Tarmure and violist Mat Maneri wins the **2016 DOWNBEAT BEST ALBUM OF THE YEAR** and a 5\* masterpiece review in Downbeat Magazine: “Alluring timelessness . . . like many of the great masters, pianist Lucian Ban makes personal art that feels universal” (James Hale, Downbeat).

Lucian Ban close collaboration with **Alex Harding**, one of the most significant baritone saxophonists of the past decades, has yielded an amazing body of music featuring several different groups and producing 6 albums together: his 2001 US debut **Somethin’ Holy** as a duet, the 2003 **Premonition** quintet, the **Tuba Project** (2005) featuring legendary Bob Stewart on tuba, Alex Harding’s **Blutopia The Calling** (2006) featuring Nasheet Waits, the **Romanian-American Jazz Suite** (2009) a sextet co-lead with soprano sax virtuoso Sam Newsome re-interpreting Romanian folk songs and the 2019 NYC Jazz Record BEST ALBUM OF THE YEAR **Dark Blue** a duet celebrating two decades of working together.

In 2020 Lucian Ban releases **Transylvanian Folk Songs** in trio with **Mat Maneri** and legendary **John Surman** re imagining the Béla Bartók collected folk songs of Romanian people in Transylvania at the beginning of XX century. Album garners critical acclaim with features on National Public Radio, Financial Times, Jazziz, The Wire, etc.

Lucian Ban has composed original scores for dozens theater productions, for dance and movies and live scoring for films by Andy Warhol and Andrei Tarkovsky. Lucian has performed/recorded with: Mat Maneri, Abraham Burton, John Surman, Nasheet Waits, Alex Harding, Billy Hart, Badal Roy, Barry Altschul, Ralph Alessi, Gerald Cleaver, Bob Stewart, Tony Malaby, Evan Parker, Mark Helias, Sam Newsome, Ralph Alessi, Pheeroan AkLaff, Jorge Sylvester, Albrecht Maurer, Reggie Nicholson, Drew Gress, J.D. Allen, Randy Peterson, Brad Jones, John Hebert, Albrecht Maurer, Eric McPherson, Derrek Phillips, etc.



### Press Quotes:

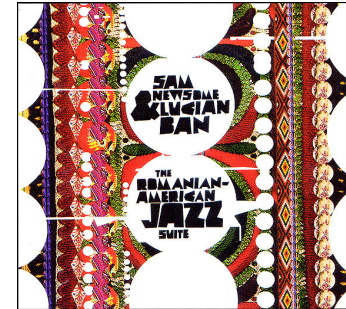
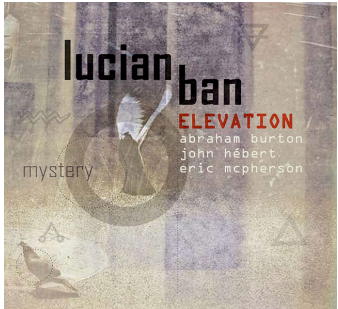
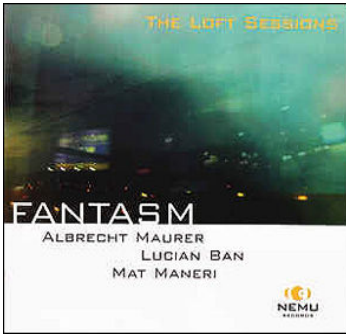
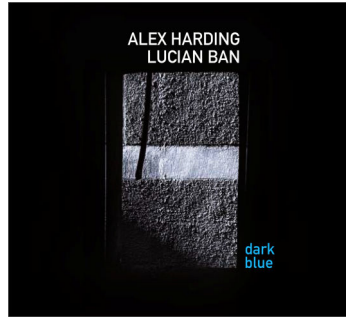
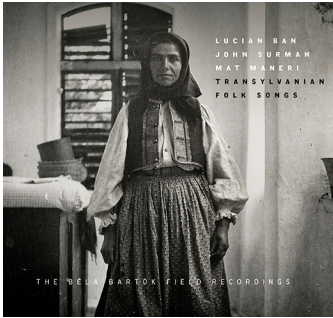
*“Ban plays with a fluency and sensibility that recalls Vladimir Horowitz as much as McCoy Tyner” – All About Jazz*

*“Like many of the great masters, pianist Lucian Ban makes personal art that feels universal” – DOWNBEAT*

*“Ban’s tasteful, reflective piano playing combines the elegance and technical precision of the European classical tradition with wide-ranging musical interests and a passion for improvisation” – All About Jazz*

*“Ban suggests Keith Jarrett, Monk and early Abdullah Ibrahim with 20th-century classical infusion” – The Guardian*

# Discography



**TRANSYLVANIAN FOLK SONGS** | Sunnyside Records 2020

Lucian Ban (piano) John Surman (bari & sop sax, bass clarinet) Mat Maneri (viola)

**DUST | MAT MANERI Quartet** | Sunnyside Records 2019

Mat Maneri (vla) Lucian Ban (p) John Hebert (b) Randy Peterson (dr)

**DARK BLUE** | Sunnyside Records 2019

Alex Harding (bari sax bass cl) Lucian Ban (p)

**FREE FALL** | Sunnyside Records 2019

Lucian Ban (p) Alex Simu (clarinet & bass cl)

**SOUNDING TEARS** | Clean Feed Records 2017

Mat Maneri (viola) Evan Parker (sop & ten sax) Lucian Ban (piano)

**SONGS FROM AFAR | ELEVATION** | Sunnyside Records 2016

Lucian Ban (p) Abraham Burton (ts) John Hebert (b) Eric McPherson (dr) + Gavril Tarmure (voc) Mat Maneri (vla)

**FANTASM** | Nemu Records 2015

Albrecht Maurer (vln) Lucian Ban (p) Mat Maneri (vla)

**TRANSYLVANIAN CONCERT** | ECM Records 2013

Lucian Ban (piano) Mat Maneri (viola)

**MYSTERY | ELEVATION** | Sunnyside Records 2013

Lucian Ban (p) Abraham Burton (ts) John Hebert (b) Eric McPherson (dr)

**ENESCO RE-IMAGINED** | Sunnyside Records 2010

Lucian Ban (p & arr) John Hebert (b & arr) Tony Malaby (ts) Ralph Alessi (tpt) Mat Maneri (vla) Gerald Cleaver (dr) Badal Roy (tabla & perc) Mat Maneri (vla) Albrecht Maurer (vln)

**THE ROMANIAN-AMERICAN JAZZ SUITE** | Jazzaway Records 2008

Sam Newsome (sop sax) Lucian Ban (p) Alex Harding (bari sax) Arthur Balogh (b) Willard Dyson (dr) Sorin Romanescu (g)

**3AM** | La Strada Music 2008

Silent Strike (programming) Alex Harding (bari sax) Lucian Ban (piano & keys)

**THE CALLING | Alex Harding Blutoxia** | Jazzaway Records 2006

Alex Harding (bari sax) Lucian Ban (p) Nasheet Waits (dr) Brad Jones (bass) Andrew Daniels (perc)

**PLAYGROUND** | Jazzaway Records 2006

Jorge Sylvester (alto sax) Lucian Ban (p) Brad Jones (b) Derrek Phillips (dr)

**TUBA PROJECT** | CIMP Records 2005

Alex Harding (bari sax) Lucian Ban (p) Bob Stewart (b) J.D. Allen (ts) Derrek Phillips (dr)

**PREMONITION** | CIMP Records 2003

Alex Harding (bari sax) Lucian Ban (p) Erik Torrente (alto sax) Chris Dahlgren (b) Damion Reid (dr)

**SOMETHIN' HOLY** | CIMP Records 2002

Alex Harding (bari sax) Lucian Ban (p)

**FROM NOW ON** | Green Records 1999

Lucian Ban (p) Eddie Neumann (ts) Ferdi Schukking (sop sax) Vlaicu Golcea (b), Eugen Nichiteanu (dr)

**CHANGES LIVE AT GREEN HOURS** | Green Records 1998

Lucian Ban (p) Eddie Neumann (ts) Vlaicu Golcea (b), Vlad Stefanescu (dr) Fabrice Doutouma (perc & voc) Maurille Amousou (perc & voc)

## Honors & Awards

- NPR Fresh Music feature on **Transylvanian Folk Song** release by L. Ban, John Surman & Mat Maneri
- ROLLING STONE “BEST JAZZ OF 2019”- Mat Maneri **DUST** album
- New York City Jazz Record 2019 ALBUM OF THE YEAR – **Dark Blue** by Alex Harding & Lucian Ban
- New York City Jazz Record 2019 HONORABLE MENTION – **Free Fall** by Lucian Ban & Alex Simu
- “I 20 migliori dischi JAZZ del 2017”, Giornale della Musica, Italy - **Sounding Tears**
- DOWNBEAT BEST ALBUM OF 2016 / 5 \* stars Elevation **Songs from Afar**
- Lucian Ban featured on the Jan 2014 cover of JAZZ INSIDE MAGAZINE – “An American-Romanian Jazz Man”
- BEST ALBUM OF THE YEAR, 2013 All About Jazz (Robert Bush) - **Transylvanian Concert** (ECM Records)
- BEST ALBUM OF THE YEAR, 2013 Cuadernos de Jazz, Spain - **Transylvanian Concert** (ECM Records)
- BEST ALBUM OF THE YEAR, 2013 Jeff Stockton (New York City Jazz Record) – Elevation **Mystery**
- BEST ALBUM OF THE YEAR, 2013 Ken Micaloff (Downbeat) – Elevation **Mystery**
- BEST ALBUM OF THE YEAR, 2013 Elzy Kolb (Hothouse) – Elevation **Mystery**
- VILLAGE VOICE – Honorable Mention **Enesco Re-Imagined** – Francis Davis / The Village Voice 2010
- BEST OF 2010 **Enesco Re-Imagined** – John Szwed / Jazz Journalists Association
- BEST OF 2010 **Enesco Re-Imagined** – Michael J. West / Jazz Journalists Association
- 2005 & 2006 nominated for Hans Koller Jazz Preis (European Jazz Prize) by jazz critic Virgil Mihaiu.
- **2005 New York Innovative Theatre Awards** – Outstanding Sound Design and Best Score for Original Score for “**Philosopher Fox**” theater production
- “**BEST SHOWS OF 2003**” All About Jazz NY **Lucian Ban & Alex Harding Ensemble** featuring Barry Altschul
- **Premonition** (CIMP 2003) by Lucian Ban & Alex Harding 5tet – awarded 4\* stars in All Music Guide
- **Somethin’ Holy** (CIMP 2002) by Lucian Ban & Alex Harding Duo – awarded 3\* stars in All Music Guide
- **From Now On** (Green Records 1999) by Lucian Ban Jazz Unit 7tet wins BEST JAZZ ALBUM OF THE YEAR by Actualitatea Muzicala Magazine of Romanian Composer Union.