

# BIOGRAPHY OF ELISA TOFFOLI

Multi platinum Italian singer Elisa was only 16 when her raw talent was discovered by music producer Caterina Caselli, who encouraged her to move to the United States to become fluent in English, the language of her songs.

About four years later, her debut album "Pipes & Flowers" was released under Caselli's label, Sugar Music, and produced by Corrado Rustici. It took only a few months to earn many awards in Italy that also included the prestigious "Premio Tenco" award (Best Record of the Year awarded by the critics) and the PIM award, the Italian Music Award. Soonafter, it was released in several European countries and Elisa toured throughout Europe as the opening act for international pop star Eros Ramazzotti.

Many people wondered why Elisa, an Italian singer, wrote her songs mainly in English. The answer was to find in the attempt to protect her inner world, a world that she herself needed to understand and consolidate fully. Ironically, since English is also one of the most spoken languages in the world, the passing of years has turned this strange attempt to hide and to protect into an opportunity, one that made her music reach more people beyond Italian borders.

In 2000, Elisa released her second album, "Asile's World", filled with more inward-looking lyrics than the first and engraved with a dense electronic sound. It was recorded in the US and Europe and was produced by a team of different producers such as Darren Allison, Howie B, Roberto Verneti, Mauro Malavasi, and Leo Z. Symbolically the word "Asile" is Elisa spelt backwards.

Not until the following year, did Elisa write and release a song in her native Italian. It was titled "Luce (Tramonti a Nord Est)". Italian blues man Zuccherò Fornaciari helped Elisa complete the chorus. The tune won the Sanremo Festival, the most important event in the Italian music scene, and Elisa's success in Italy grew immediately. Such great feedback let her receive the Italian Music Awards and the MTV European Music Awards for the Best Italian Act, just to name a few.

Elisa's third album was released in 2001 and was titled "Then Comes The Sun". An international version was released in more than twenty countries such as Germany, Spain, The Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, South Africa, and New Zealand. Having abandoned the electronic arrangements (*"the arrangements are just like dress for a song"*, she would have said later), she focused on the simplicity of her message.

In 2002 Elisa got to sing at the Winter Olympics closing ceremony in Salt Lake City, Utah and then repeated four years later at the 2006 Winter Games in Turin, Italy. The same year she was one of the main guests in Pavarotti & Friends, where she performed a duet with Luciano Pavarotti.

In 2003 Gabriele Muccino (director of "Pursuit of Happyness" and "Seven Pounds") asked Elisa to record a rendition of an Italian song titled "Almeno Tu Nell'Universo" for his new film ("Ricordati Di Me").

In the same year the "Lotus" album was released. It was the fourth and was produced by Elisa herself with the supervision of Pasquale Minieri. It had a seventies era flare due to the fact that Elisa meant to draw on the vital energy and creative verve of that period.

After a long tour in Italian theatres, well connected American producer Glen Ballard (Anastacia, Alanis Morissette, Christina Aguilera) reached out to her to collaborate on a few songs, which eventually resulted in even more: "Pearl Days", a ten-track album full of energy released in 2004. It was Elisa's fifth album. The songs were played by some of the best musicians known in the international scene: Matt Chamberlain as drummer (Tori Amos, Macy Gray) and who also wrote the rhythmical sessions, Tim Pierce as guitarist (Phil Collins, John Bon Jovi, Rod Stewart), and Michael Landau. The "Pearl Days" album was followed by another long tour.

In 2005 Elisa performed at Rome's Circus Maximus for "Live 8", a big event consisting of a string of benefit concerts that took place on 2 July 2005 in the G8 states and in South Africa in support of the aims of the UK's "Make Poverty History" campaign and the "Global Call for Action Against Poverty".

Some months later Italian radio started to play "Gli Ostacoli Del Cuore," which eventually topped the Italian charts and was included in her greatest hits album "Soundtrack '96-'06" that was meant to celebrate Elisa's first ten years of her career. It has sold more than 600,000 copies so far.

In 2006 Elisa wrote and produced "Teach Me Again", a track in which she sang with the international singer Tina Turner. The tune, which raised funds for abandoned children, was the main theme of the "All The Invisible Children" film, a multicultural project made of seven short films, each one signed by important directors such as Mehdi Charef, Emir Kusturica, Spike Lee, Kátia Lund, Jordan Scott, Ridley Scott, Stefano Veneruso, and John Woo. "Teach Me Again" was released in Germany, Greece, Switzerland, Spain, Portugal, and other European countries, remaining on top of the Italian singles chart for a number of weeks.

In 2007 Elisa crashed onto the American music scene as the result of the ballad "Dancing" that was featured on the American talent show "So You Think You Can Dance?", broadcast on Fox America. The song entered the iTunes top 20 single chart both in the U.S. and in Canada, drawing unexpectedly with it the "Then Comes the Sun" album on the iTunes album chart as well. "Dancing" remained for some time on the iTunes pop charts and ranked 25th in the "Billboard Hot Singles Recurrent for the Year". On the final episode of the show, the winner danced to Elisa's song "Rock Your Soul".

In 2008, Elisa released her first album targeting North America music lovers. The "Dancing" album, a collection of Elisa's best ballads, climbed to number 5 on Billboard's poll for Best Album of 2008.

In October and November Elisa headed to North America to promote the "Dancing" album. It was Elisa's first tour in Canada and the US, spanning 16 cities from Toronto to Seattle. She was accompanied by her band in clubs that made music history.

A live performance of Elisa singing "Dancing" is spotlighted on the early 2008 DVD release "Vivere: Andrea Bocelli Live In Tuscany", which also features her sublime duet with the legendary tenor on the beautiful Italian song "La Voce Del Silenzio".

On April 21, 2009 Elisa joined 55 other Italian artists in Milan to record a single recording titled "Domani" dedicated to those suffering personal losses from the tragic earthquake that struck Central Italy earlier that month. This recording followed a fundraising concert in June at the San Siro Soccer Stadium in Milan.

Elisa's new album "Heart" was released in November 2009 and immediately topped the Italian album charts. It is Elisa's sixth studio album and includes 14 songs produced by Elisa along with Andrea Rigonat. One of the tracks is an emotional duet with English born singer-songwriter Antony Hegarty known best as the lead singer of the band "Antony and the Johnsons". It is currently going triple platinum.

### **Personal and Career Highlights**

Elisa Toffoli, professionally known as Elisa, was born December 19, 1977, in in Monfalcone, Italy

1997: released debut album, "Pipes & Flowers";  
2000: released second album, "Asile's World";  
2001: released the song, "Luce (Tramonti a Nord Est)", her first song sang in Italian;  
2001: released third album, "Then Comes the Sun" (released in 20 countries, titled simply as "Elisa");  
2002: sang at the closing ceremonies of the Salt Lake City, Utah Winter Olympic Games;  
2003: recorded a rendition of "Almeno Tu Nell'Universo" for the film, "Ricordati Di Me", directed by Gabriele Muccino ("Pursuit of Happiness")  
2003: released fourth album, "Lotus"  
2004: released fifth album, "Pearl Days", produced by Glen Ballard;  
2005: performed for "Live 8" at Rome's Circus Maximus as part of the UK's Make Poverty History campaign and the "Global Call for Action Against Poverty";  
2006: sang at the closing ceremonies of the Turin, Italy Winter Olympic Games;  
2006: wrote and produced the song, "Teach Me Again," a duet she sang with Tina Turner;  
2006: released greatest hits CD, "Soundtrack 96-06";  
2008: released the "Dancing" album, a collection of her best ballads and her first release in North America. It climbed to 5th in Billboard's poll for Best Album of 2008;  
Fall 2008: first North American tour to promote the "Dancing" album;  
2009: released sixth studio album, "Heart" (triple platinum).