

Biography Maria Mendes

From her native Portugal to her adopted home in the Netherlands, Grammy and Latin Grammy Award-nominated vocalist and composer **Maria Mendes** is no stranger to living between two different worlds. With her critically acclaimed 2019 album *Close To Me*, Mendes, whose praises have been sung by such legendary composers as Quincy Jones and Hermeto Pascoal, spotlighted her ability to bring diverse influences together in stunning fashion with her vibrant fusion of symphonic jazz and Portuguese Fado, the folk music of her homeland.

To date, Mendes has released four striking solo albums – *Along the Road* (2012), *Innocentia* (2015), *Close To Me* (2019) and *Saudade, Colour Of Love* (2022) – and thrilled audiences around the world, from small clubs to grand stages including the world-renowned Concertgebouw in Amsterdam as well as the North Sea and Montreux Jazz Festivals. She had the honor of being the first Portuguese artist to headline New York City's iconic Blue Note Jazz Club, as well as being the first female Portuguese artist to garner a Grammy nomination.

Mendes' third album, *Close To Me*, featuring Grammy-winning arranger/pianist/producer John Beasley and the Grammy-winning Metropole Orkest, was the winner of the EDISON Jazz Awards 2020 in the category of Best Jazz Vocal Album. Also, Mendes and Beasley's arrangement of the Fado "Asas Fechadas" earned nominations for both Grammy and Latin Grammy Awards.

With Wayne Shorter's blessings, Mendes premiered his contemporary jazz piece "Gaia" in Germany (June 2022) alongside the Bielefeld Philharmoniker, saxophonist Magnus Lindgren and pianist John Beasley.

Mendes' song "Inverso," was featured on the soundtrack of the International Emmy-winning Portuguese soap opera *Ouro Verde* in 2018. Her collaborators include the Brussels Jazz Orchestra and the acclaimed jazz clarinetist Anat Cohen.

Mendes makes every song feel deeply personal, approaching the American Songbook, Brazilian classics and the Fado repertoire of her homeland with her own unique jazz interpretation. She brings a vibrant passion to every performance, whether in a hushed, intimate setting or backed by the power and beauty of symphonic orchestras or jazz big bands.

The multi-faceted jazz singer studied jazz in New York, Brussels and Rotterdam, and delved into the music of Brazil, particularly the post-bossa nova sounds of Música Popular Brasileira (MPB). These influences and experiences help make up what *Exclusive* magazine has called "one of the most engaging, enchanting vocal approaches...that exists today."

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