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CULTURE

Music. A conversation with Duo Noïma



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Tucked away in a quiet, cozy corner of Paris—somewhere between cobbled alleys and cafes steeped in the aroma of coffee and the hum of music—I met Duo Noïma, two women whose journeys began in distant corners of the world but converged through the voice of the flute.

[By Jawaher Yousofi, published on 02/05/2025]



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Eleni, from Cyprus, and Virginie, from France, are the duo behind *Duo Noïma*—a delicate and inventive musical partnership. While apparently feminine, their work consciously moves beyond gender stereotypes, aiming to turn music into a tool for dialogue across cultures, people, and hearts.

At their first performance in Paris, as the first notes of the flute filled the hall, few in the audience could have imagined that this sound marked the beginning of a deep friendship and a shared musical journey. But for Eleni and Virginie, music is not just about sound. It's a connection, a way to speak with the world.

Both women were immersed in music from an early age, though in very different ways. Eleni smiles as she recalls her teenage years: *"Music has always been a part of my life. It poured out of the child inside me."* She began with the piano, but at fifteen, the sound of the flute awakened something deeper. Soft, yet powerful, it struck a chord in her soul. One of her female teachers, a flutist herself, inspired her to follow this inner voice rather than take the conventional path. And so began a bond with the flute that continues to this day.

Different origins, a shared melody

Virginie nods in agreement. She comes from a family where music was always present—both parents were amateur musicians, and her « second mother » was a professional pianist. Yet, despite starting with the piano, she never quite felt at home with it. The turning point came when she saw a live performance of *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* by Ravel. The sound of the flute captivated her so profoundly that, at age eleven, she decided to become a flutist. *« When I saw that flutist... something lit up in me. I just knew—that's what I wanted to do »* She said. That decision eventually led her to join the Cyprus National Orchestra in 2005.



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Their paths crossed by chance in Cyprus—Virginie was teaching, and Eleni, then a student, was searching for new sounds. At the time, it seemed like a brief encounter. But a few years later in Paris, it took on new meaning.

From the classroom to the stage

They decided to continue their musical dialogue. What began with casual rehearsals in their living room quickly turned into public performances. For over two years now, Duo Noïma has been performing, recording, and launching creative projects that cross cultural boundaries.

Beyond Performance: A purposeful journey

Their ambition goes beyond simply playing concerts. They want to travel, meet people, and share their love for music. They're also committed to amplifying the voices of composers who are often overlooked in the mainstream classical world.

They see themselves as a bridge—linking artists and listeners, turning each performance into a space for emotional and intellectual exchange. In their vision, the audience isn't just there to listen—they become part of the emotional conversation.

Music without borders

Eleni grew up in a context with fewer musical opportunities, but her hunger to learn never dimmed. Virginie, by contrast, benefited from a vibrant, well-resourced musical environment. Yet despite these differences, they believe that music knows no borders. Even when playing Bach, Tchaikovsky, or Beethoven, the interpretations may vary, but the emotional core remains the same. Their cultural contrast—Eleni from the Eastern Mediterranean and Virginie from Western Europe—hasn't been a barrier. In fact, it's been a source of creative richness.



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« The culture is different, but the feeling is the same. » When asked about their cultural differences, they explain: *« Yes, France and Cyprus are very different. In Cyprus, there are fewer resources. But music... it crosses borders. It doesn't matter whether it's Bach or Beethoven—if you feel the notes, it doesn't matter where you're from. »* Eleni adds: *« In Cyprus, opportunities were limited, but my passion always found a way.»*

Virginie continues: *« I bring a lot of ideas and energy from the more professional musical environment in France. But when we play together, we speak the same language: music. »* Duo Noïma is more than just a musical duo. These two women—shaped by different paths—have found a shared language born of feeling and passion, aimed at fostering deep, human connections with the world around them.

A tapestry of instruments and voices

Their performances incorporate a variety of flutes—from European and Japanese instruments to those with Arabic roots. They select pieces by composers from diverse backgrounds to reflect this cultural mosaic.

But for them, the choice of repertoire isn't about the nationality of the composer—it's about emotional resonance. « *Methods of teaching and emotional expression may differ across cultures, but in the end, what unites us is shared feeling.* »

They see performance as more than an aesthetic experience. To them, music can influence ideologies, move emotions, and even help spark social change.

A final message: The sound of connection

Before we say goodbye, I ask: if you had just one sentence to invite people to your music, what would it be? Virginie smiles: « *Come... come and don't just listen—feel. Maybe somewhere in the sound, you'll find a piece of yourself.* »

For Duo Noima, music is about connection—not just between people, but between a person and their inner self. They believe music can be more powerful than any speech or declaration, because it reaches directly into the heart and subconscious. « *We perform to send a message—a message of empathy, of seeing the other, and of believing in a better world.* »

Duo Noima isn't just a professional music group; it's a manifestation of love, peace, creative expression, and faith in the transformative power of music. As they say: « *We don't just play. We speak, we touch, we connect. Music isn't our second language—it's our first.* »

And finally...

In a world where noise is constant and ears are tired, Duo Noïma reminds us of something we may have forgotten: that music, when it comes from the heart, can soothe, awaken, even set us free.

« *And perhaps that's why, when they play, you don't just want to listen—you want to feel.* »

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