

Faytinga, born Dahab Faid Tinga but also commonly known as Dehab Faytinga, is a prominent African singer and musician from Eritrea, with a Kunama heritage.

Faytinga comes from the Kunama people, one of Eritrea's many tribes, where women and men have equal rights. Born in 1964, she joined the liberation struggle at the age of fourteen, where she was given education and later became a combatant until the liberation in 1991. Her mother grew up in the highlands of Eritrea, while her father was a revered figure among the Kunama people, fighting for his homeland. He was given the nickname of 'Fighting gun' (taken from his name 'Faid Tinga') by the British administration in the early 50's.



Her dream to become a singer came true when she was sent to entertain troops on the front, using her songs as a message of hope and determination. She composes her own songs and also interprets work from well known Eritrean poets and composers. When singing, she plays the krar, a small lyre. An accomplished and elegant dancer as well as talented singer, she became a leading figure and source of inspiration to her country men and women.

In 1990, she toured the US and Europe as a member of The National Folkloric Troupe of Eritrea called the Sibrit Cultural Troupe. She toured for the first time as a solo artist in 1995 after releasing her first album 'Sala Da Goda' on tape. She won the 2nd prize and 1st East African women singer at the 2000 Ma' Africa in Benoni, South Africa. It took until 1999 and an appearance at the Africolor festival in France, before she could record her first CD album 'Numey'.



'Numeŷ' is her second album. It is also her first international release on the Paris-based Cobalt Records label. All of the songs on this album are in Kunama, a very old African language. When listening, some ties to West African music surface. The Eritrean bass-lute called the wata is remarkably similar to the ngoni. Another similarity with music from the other side of the continent, many of my songs are 'advice' songs, such as 'Numeŷ' ('Don't interrupt the teller'). However, her delicate vocals are decidedly East African, as are the lyrics of songs like 'Milomala', a song from Eritrea's struggle for independence in the 1980s.

In 2003, still finding her inspiration in Eritrea's musical tradition with krar and wata, she also brought guitar, flute, and percussions in her third album 'Eritrea'.

Speaking in August 2016 to the online music magazine Music in Africa, Faytinga indicated that she is working on her fourth album. She said that "one of my new songs in this upcoming album will address the out-of-control global crisis and disorder around us that you see every day,"... "It says, 'Let the tears stop'."

Faytinga has been performing around the world representing Eritrea as a 'cultural ambassador' for her country. She participated to Expo 2005 in Aichi, Japan and to Expo 2010 in Shanghai, China. She also attended the Earth Summit 2002 held in Johannesburg, South Africa. In addition, she has been collaborated with other artists such as the group Oui-Dire in an attempt to mix her voice, her music and culture with that of other continents.

More recently, in January 2016, she participated to the live recording of France Musique emission "Couleurs du Monde" "Mama Africa with Lulendo, from Angola, and Mâ Nga, Blick Bassy and Patrick Bébey from Cameroon. From 7 to 9 July 2016, she also participated to the Førde Traditional and World Music Festival in Norway.

Faytinga is one of the first Eritrean artists engaged in support of people living with HIV and AIDS. She has participated in numerous World AIDS Day events including as guest-star singer on 1st December 2003 during the event held at the Hotel Intercontinental, and in June 2005, together with Kenyan singer Achieng Abura in an exceptional gala diner concert for the benefit of women and children affected by HIV and AIDS. She also performed on the occasion of the opening of the Namibia gender-based violence Art Exhibition on 10 December 2013 at UNAIDS Headquarters in Geneva.

*Freedom fighter woman turned musician, Faytinga has always been interested in music and developed her style 'in the field' that represents her own blend of several traditional music forms. On 30 August 2004, in an interview with Joel Savage for The Voice Magazine she said that "I sing about peace, love, and togetherness, since war, conflict and other disturbances did not bring any positive change to Africa, but it only creates refugee crisis, pains, agony, discomfort and economic hardship. I bring a music of hope to the people."*

*"There is no easy road to success"*