

LUCIE PÉRIER'S APPLES IN WINTER

Anne Marie Kennedy interviews the French flute payer, Lucie Périer.



Photo : Célia Hélan

AMK: “Your parents had a genetic, musical and cultural connection to Ireland and at a young age they saw your natural ability and nurtured it?”

Lucie: “I have had the wonderful chance to be raised in a very musical background. Both my parents are musicians and singers and my childhood is filled with musical memories, from sessions at home in the kitchen or concerts with my parents playing on stage, and as a young child I wished I could be with them, sharing the music and the fun. My parents saw very early that I had a strong interest in music and dance, so they took me to dance lessons as well as piano lessons.

“My parents have been my greatest teachers, I’ve never stopped learning from them”

I was 7. Later on, I think I tried all the instruments that I could grab at home until I came up with the whistle and eventually the concert flute aged 11. When you’ve been given such a chance, I feel it is normal to share it now as an adult, to pass on the knowledge and experience you have to younger musicians or even more experienced musicians as a means to keep the music alive, in every home hopefully!”

AMK: “You were aware of the physicality of the body in dance, movement, choreography; do you still play in different genres with the dancer in mind?”

Lucie: “For ten years I toured with fest-noz bands Les Round’Baleurs and Trio Tarare, music that was composed specifically for dancing. I thought I would never be able to play music without dancers in front of me, that it would not make any sense to play in front of a sitting audience! As a matter of fact, even though I no longer play music specifically for dancing, at all my concerts the audience is invited up to dance.”

AMK: “How were you influenced in instrumentation?”

Lucie: “I took up the concert flute aged 11 and from the very beginning I knew I wanted to play all kinds of music: Irish traditional,

classical, Latin, jazz, Eastern and Scandinavian music. It felt more convenient to have just one instrument to focus on and develop fully. I grew up listening to the masters of Irish music from the 70s to 2000s, but also to older tapes my mother brought back from Ireland. I’ve learned from flute teachers in the local Music School, the flute players in workshops, musicians I’ve played with, influential performances but my parents have been my greatest teachers, I’ve never stopped learning from them.”

AMK: “You discovered that your music travelled well.”

Lucie: “Yes, in New Caledonia island, what an adventure! My husband Nicolas and I felt we had reached a turning point and needed to move on, and that meant far from home! We had friends there who played Irish traditional music, planned on visiting them for a few months, but while there we got invited to perform and teach, allowing us live as full-time musicians for a whole year. One of the greatest memories we have is a performance at the Museum of New Caledonia, where we played Irish music amongst all the other communities, where we ‘shared the same magic’, so said the Cultural Manager of the Museum.”

AMK: “What are you working on right now?”

Lucie: “2019 was a busy one, with the recording of the album *Apples In Winter* with fiddle player Orwin Hébert. Orwin and I have known each other for quite a long time but it was only in 2017 that we started to play as a duet on a regular basis. After the ‘Caledonian break’, I thought it was just the right time to record an album with Orwin, because the music we had together felt like an alchemist had been at work! After a year of tune-swapping and studio time in October, we released the album last December.

“Nicolas and I have been touring as an Irish music duet also, just started a new adventure called *Kongo Yélé* with Madou Mounkoro, n’Goni & Kora and Phil Touat. It is not Irish but Manding Music, but again, the same magic! We are also working on a concert-film based

on the film *Irish Destiny*, hoping to present by the end of 2020. I’m also touring with a band called Flinn, with Jean-Pierre Aufort on fiddle and Pierre Duparfait on guitar and working on my ‘Planxty Project’, which is a challenge of newly composed Irish traditional music, Planxty tunes, Suantraí and dance tunes.”

Apples in Winter is available at www.lucieperier.com



Photo : Mylene Godard