



MARQUIX GLOBAL NETWORK



Julie Curly

Julie Curly's voice lands soft as snow on the audience - a delicacy of manifestation that is perfectly complemented by silent, snowy vistas of her native Canada.

Somehow - and it's hard to say exactly why or when - Western habits of music culture shifted from emphasizing (or at least acknowledging) the genius and instructional significance of its past masters. Now they are thought to live among us in the form of all-pervasive, comprehensively merchandized gods of popular concept. If not for conscientiously sentimental artists like Julie Curly we could lose a vital connection to the past as interest in the great icons of music collapses under a sustained assault from the amplifiers of id that run marketing departments and radio stations. Her new video single 'Can You Imagine?' is a highly emotional - and beautifully rendered - account of the day Lennon left this world (and Curly entered it). Her voice is inevitably the focal point of the production given its tremendous strength and sincerity, but the piece is beautiful to behold on its other merits too. Independent reporter Andrew Edwards recently caught up with the comely Canadian to talk about her long trek through the labyrinth of music performance to become a composer in her own right.

ANDREW: Let's just get this out in the open - what's the craziest thing that's happened to you in your music career?

JULIE: Okay I see we are beginning with the juicy stuff! Let's see... at an outdoor winter show (minus twenty in Quebec) I fell off the stage while performing - but never stopped singing. I made a sound check with a dress made half transparent because of the lighting - and found out about it afterward. And oh yeah; I traveled from my Canadian hometown to Europe to do some shows with a guy I had never met before - no comments about how that turned out! On the bright side, I won an Akademia Music Award, so my song traveled to California before I even got the chance to visit the place, which I have dreamed of since my teenage years!

ANDREW: Your song 'Can You Imagine? (The Killing Of John Lennon)' is receiving a positive listener response on radio. What was your initial reaction when you first heard your song playing on radio?

JULIE: What? Please let me know which station I can hear it on! I'll scream for sure! And maybe sing along... (Cheesy, isn't it?)

ANDREW: What was the inspiration behind your debut radio single?

JULIE: My debut radio single is called 'Can you imagine? (The Killing of John Lennon)'. This unique musician, poet and peacemaker is my main influence - not only in music, but in life. Did I mentioned I was born in a precariously premature condition in Montreal at the same time Lennon died in New York? And that my mother was a Beatles fan? This is the story behind 'Can you Imagine?' I sang it live for the first time to launch my first album. The song and video were recorded live

(adding some shots of a snowy Montreal (today later). I thought it made sense to pay tribute to Lennon and Mother with this song since they've both had a tremendous influence on my life. The lyrics are as important to me as the music, which was composed by my singing teacher of six years, Monique Dumas, who was able to translate my yearnings. She's a talented musician and taught me so much!

ANDREW: It is often said that great art arises from difficult experience. Is there something in your life experience thus far that you would describe as the 'catalyst' or 'fuel' for your desire to create music?

JULIE: I could say that being born premature at less than three pounds was a difficult experience, but I don't remember it! It was more difficult for my mother, who almost faced that moment when the doctor says 'your child is dead' before quietly leaving the room. Seriously, the first songs I wrote coincided with events situated around my coming out, so I think that my desire to express myself through music is fueled, or emerges from that. The desire to express my true self, no matter what others think.

ANDREW: How would you characterize yourself as an artist/musician? (Ex. Down-to-earth, serious, fun-loving, complicated...)

JULIE: Like a Shredded Wheat... you know the breakfast cereal? Made from whole wheat, one side dressed with frosted sugar. So for the frosted side, I would say that I'm a really easygoing person during the creative process, because I think that art emerges from freedom of speech and thought. In fact, I may be a Flower Child (or let's say hippie) from that standpoint. But as for the business side - or the wheat side if we keep to the metaphor - I'm a really down-to-earth person, and very organized. For me that's what it takes to be an independent artist!



ANDREW: What has your experience been like working with the other people on your team?

JULIE: Making great music is about having strong ideas and sharing them with passionate musicians. I'm fortunate enough to have both (great musicians with great ideas!) For the past decade, I did multiple shows in Quebec, even some in France and Belgium, in various projects as a singer-songwriter, a choir member and in cover bands. Then, I met a talented composer, Gilbert Cantin, with whom I collaborated to produce my first album in 2014, called Confessions. This twelve-track work is lyricized in French, my first language. With all the production and promotion steps it was a long (but exciting!) creative process, but everyone - even if we are a very small team - embraced the project. For the launching of the CD we had very talented musicians: Jean-Yves Cardin (keyboards), Didier Renaud (bass), Robert Massé (drums), Anne-Marie Kirouac & Jenny Kuca (percussions) and, of course, Gilbert on the guitar. Since the launch we have stayed together, touring, rehearsing and composing new songs. For me this is the greatest source of personal fulfillment; making music with amazing musicians. Collaboration creates a musical microcosm where I can express myself, and this is priceless; it's the reason I do it.

ANDREW: Did you come from a musical background? Are there other musicians in your family?

JULIE: Not at all, in fact! I'm the only artist in the family, so where does it all come from? Another life maybe... since my teenage years, I have felt a tremendous passion for all kinds of arts. At eighteen I began film studies - continuing through a master's degree - while learning the guitar. Strumming some chords, I discovered my voice and took singing lessons. So singing, teaching cinema, and writing (I'm also a journalist), are three interrelated passions that grew together through the years. Even if I'm not from a family with a musical or artistic background, I feel very lucky that my parents always understood my passion for those ambitions.

ANDREW: What do you find most rewarding about being an artist? What do you find most challenging?

JULIE: For me it's a privilege to make music and have people come to my shows to hear it. I never take that for granted! Putting your emotions out there - and personal thoughts and feelings - for the world to audit may sometimes be a scary thing... but watching people respond positively to your performance is priceless! Exposing your creation to the world is in itself difficult, but I would say that the most difficult thing is to get heard! There are so many talented bands - and so much noise - that it's difficult to get in front of the right people. So if you read these lines and feel concerned by the music business, 'Call me' as Blondie once required!

ANDREW: Who are your role models in music?

JULIE: This is a difficult question, because there are so many talented musicians around! Still, I must say Katie Melua, a talented singer-songwriter, whose intelligent lyrics and sensitive emotion always impress me. Joss Stone, for her soulful voice! As for the legends, Aretha Franklin, Janis Joplin, and of course the Beatles!

ANDREW: Describe your best or most memorable performance.

JULIE: Every time I'm onstage, I feel blessed to have the chance to express myself. But, when it's your own songs and people respond warmly to your live presence it's the best! That's what happened to my CD launch for 'Confessions' last september in Montreal. It was amazing! The show was mostly original songs, in both French and English, but there were also anecdotes and reflections of my own, on music and life in general. I had such a blast! The audience was cheering, laughing and obviously touched by the songs and stories... and that's why I do music - to touch people by my artistic expression.

ANDREW: What advice would you give to young, aspiring artists out there who are unsure and need guidance?

JULIE: It's funny, because as a journalist, when I'm interviewing musicians I always ask this question! It depends so much on your individual path through the art. Follow your dream and vision would be my cheesy answer... but it's true! Be honest with yourself and others. The public knows when your emotions are fake. Finally, work hard and put together an amazing team!

ANDREW: What's next for you as an artist? Is there a new single in the works? If so, what can you tell us about it?

JULIE: In the upcoming months we have local shows scheduled in Montreal - a Quebec tour let's say - to spread the word about the album 'Confessions'. We will also perform some English songs. We have enough material to make a second album and most of the songs are in English. We haven't chosen a single yet, but we have a song about New York City that has an amazing vibe... just saying! So you'll surely hear more of Curly in the next few months!

ANDREW: Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with us about your amazing passion for music - and original point of view where its principles and possibilities are concerned. We're certain the coming year will bring you great success and personal satisfaction!

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