

Rob: And I'm by the fireside at the house of Olivier Perpere, known as Ozegan, who is a story-teller and an author. First of all, Ozegan, how did you become a story-teller?

Ozegan: It's a long, long story. When I was young my grandfather, my mother told me, er, fairies tales and I was very fond of but I've never imagined that one day I will be a story-teller. I think life makes us big surprises. Yah! Alors, the first decision I've taken is when I was living at St. Malo and there is a little train for tourists you know to visit the town and I was living on a studio just err on the road and the train every day stops just near and I heard every day "!!*!!*!!*!! St. Malo" I think to myself my god there is other ways to visit to share the beauties of our town, of our culture so I take my courage and I make little fliers to propose visits but with little group and I began to share umm our tradition you know about legend, fairy tales about the coast of St Malo and I began in Broceliande too and the first group I've, I've guide at Broceliande was in 1985 and I'm one of the first storyteller, pionier, pioneer, of ballad conte of storytelling visiting forest.

Rob: Storytelling is a traditional craft. Why do you think it's so popular in Brittany?

Ozegan: When I've began fairy tales were not so popular you know. There is waves. And now yes we have new interest a renaissance a new birth but 30 years ago it wasn't the the case. You know there is a a miranjam wisdom which says that people, a nation who forgets his fairy tales is a nation which is dying.

Rob: Is there a difference between a fairy tale and a legend?

Ozegan: Yes. At the beginning err legend the roots of the word means the things you have to read to others and legend are speaking about things which are not real but it's a very good way to speak about real things because its like music. Our reason accepts to hear and to, to receive fairy tales because our reasons thinks it's not true this is imagination, so I'm not in danger. And the conte the story telling there is a root, a real historic root, but after people quelque part somewhere they create another you know versions of a ballad there is always something true inside umm story, but it's like music, fairy tales are speaking to our soul and our heart.

Rob: You err present your stories, you tell your stories around the fire like we are now. Who comes to listen to your stories?

Ozegan: Schools invite me so I do something for pupils, for young people. I'm very lucky because life gives me the beautiful opportunity to meet every people in our society. Yes I share in an evening in tea salon for example at Trehorenteuc at Maison des Sources and its people who like the forest not especially from this place . Most of them yes but there are always people from outside from Rennes or from Normandy and even from Vendée who are coming and I'm sharing too in maison de retraite, you know in I don't know the word in English...

Rob: Yes, old people's home

Ozegan: Yes voilà so I see our grandfathers and grandmothers. I share with our little children with our parents, our grandparent. I have different repertoires, one on Middle Ages on the tales of troubadours, knights people of court of King Arthur and have another about the Vikings legend and umm I'm very cool for medieval tales you know and with my instruments too because I've a few instruments which were played by troubadours people.

Rob: Maybe Ozegan you can play us some music. But first before you do that, are there some evenings between now and for example the end of this year where you will be telling stories?

Ozegan: Yes, yes, alors. Saturday 16th December I'm at Trehorenteuc, in the tea salon I've spoken before, la Maison des Sources and it's une veillée there is 3 parts you know, first part about 45 minutes story telling and after we eat together we share a beautiful meal, vegetarian meal, and then the third part after eating near the fire because the maison, la Maison des Sources has a beautiful cheminee and at Christmas the fire is very important very sacred. Our ancestors take care especially of the Christmas fire. They, they take a bouche, a log from the last year which is passed between the fire just 1 or 2, 3 times to have the fire of the last year and after we make the fire with the, the, the log for a new fire and we keep the log of Christmas on the grenier to protect the home from fire from storm from oragon you know.. From thunder and from illness too and we make a kind of ceremonies you know with people because this fire is able to burn the bad things of the past the, the, the, yes the last year you know we write on a little sheet the things we don't want to see any more in our life. And we offer them ...

Rob: ...into the fire

Ozegan: Yah yes

Rob: This is a tradition that must be older than Christmas as a Christian tradition is it ?

Ozegan: Yes, yes, yes. We call them the solsticial feasts it was before Christianity all people from Europe were celebrating this fest because it is the end of the longest night of the year. They take 12 days just after the longest night during 12 day they make fire night and days the fire mustn't stop. If the fire stop its a big, big disaster for the home for the family but in this 12 days they were thinking that each day is, is tied to a month in the next year for example the first day is January the second February and so on. This is reason why our ancestor stop war during this days because they didn't want to have war for the next year you know so during these 12 days before Christianity they make peace. Alors between neighbours and between nations too and when you want to, to have a pardon and to give your pardon so you have to to go to see your neighbour and to say I'm very sorry sincerely and please accept this gift. This is the root of the gifts of Christmas you know and after with Christianity Christianity récupérer ...

Rob: ...collected

Ozegan: ...collected yeah this old customs in Brittany here they take 3 days with the fire without interruption. But in the old, old time they have taken 12 days too.

Rob: That's fascinating

Ozegan: Yeah

Rob: Ozegan were gonna leave it there. Thank you vey much indeed. Perhaps we can hear some music.

Ozegan: With pleasure

Rob: Thank you for now