



Simon interviewing Kikou

Simon

I'm here with Kikou, a renowned accordionist. Why don't you just start with a short piece to wake us up in 2022

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Kikou

Its a lovely song, I'm song-writer you know.

Simon

Tell me how you got started. How long have you been playing?

Kikou

I was 16 years, no no, 19.

Simon

When you were 19.

Kikou

My father was a drummer, my mother was a violinist and my great mother, *grandmère*, street singer, but it was a time after the war, it was easy to have a work when I was born. This guy will play accordion. Ok, its not my choice, but it's very great instrument. We play anywhere. Some peoples are singing immediately. You can make all music with that.

Simon

So, so you began playing when you were 19 and were you working alone, were you playing alone or did you play with a band or?

Kikou

No, after I was guitarist because when you are 12, all friends are playing rock and roll, and you are not with your accordion in the past it was very fantastic because we have beautiful songs with Piaff, Mistinguett, every song was history and it was stupid imagine you play a U2 song with your accordion. It's stupid.

Simon

It might be quite good

Kikou

When you play rock and roll with your accordion it was too French in spirit. And the world was changing at this time. But we have very very very fabulous song.

Simon

You must know hundreds of songs

Kikou

200 or more

Simon

Ok.

Kikou

In the tradition the beginning was *les comiques troupiers* the very old song it's very surprising. Some people sing this song when *le mariage*, wedding, they sing this song 1810,

Simon

Oh, 1810. So you are like a library if you like for songs

Kikou

Yes, that finally umm, enter French memory, some people sing this songs specially because she's happy. Ok?

Simon

Yeah

Kikou

But she was not happy. General de la salle, general

Simon

General, right

Kikou

You hum it to make some *de la force pour les soldats*, Sing this song, ok?

Now you fight. That general to give energy.

Simon

Yeah, to motivate

Kikou

Ok, when you go to fight to sing too is better.

Simon

But what is the text saying? What is the story? Why is it played at weddings?

Kikou

You think about a beautiful girl for sure gave me a drink you imagine this beautiful woman and you are smiling when you die. Crazy. In the beginning of the last century it was umm, we say *comic troupier* it was just before first world war ok? Like a soldier

comic troupier

Simon

So what's that song about? What's the story in that song?

Kikou

It just when they go to make a show on the stage funny songs to *la detente comedie*

Simon

To cheer up the troops?

Kikou

Voila

Simon

Where did you learn the songs? How did you learn the songs?

Kikou

Some French people give me this book with partition with

Simon

from the record. So you had old records to listen to and to learn the songs

Kikou

Yes and every people sing these songs again tradition we have a lot of popular song, *le petit vin blanc*, you have in English it was surprising because in England you have Walk Away Renée, we have the same in France. All people sing this song, Walk Away Renée, all people sing immediately with you, because it's important between the 2 wars we sing this song because some people they need a smile need I can't imagine because I was not here. When I say every



song has a story all people, young people, roots people they sing this song, *Quelle chanson d'amour*

Simon

It's the most beautiful love song

Kikou

Eternel

Simon

It is. I think that's a perfect place to end this lovely interview, this lovely discussion, this lovely chat. Thank you Kikou for playing for us and talking to us. Good luck with all your concerts in the future. Thank you for coming in.