

Jon Interviewing Karin

Jon: OK, so Karin, you're a ballet teacher, I think.

Karin: Well, it's a combination of ballet, and Yoga, and Pilates and callanetics.

Jon: That's just about everything - is that an Olympic sport?

Karin: No. Callanetics - well, no it's not. But it's basically, an eclectic mixture of exercises that I have done, on and off, all my life since my ballet career finished and they're basically designed for any person, male or female and the idea is that you get great core strength, long, lean muscle and it's teaching you posture, grace, elegance, ah, and a certain je ne sais quoi. So without adding bulk because a lot of exercises people like doing, running, they go to the gym and it adds lots and lots of muscle and I just think that the best muscle for me is the long lean muscle. So, basically, your legs are like steel.

Jon: But tell me if somebody came to you, for example, with a back injury, would you have a specific course tailored for them or would that require someone else.

Karin: Not a specific course, but I would be very mindful of their injury and, obviously, if it was a really bad prognosis, medically, then I wouldn't even dream of accepting them for my classes. All my classes do have a disclaimer but, saying that, a lot of my exercises actually improve backs, for instance, sciatica. It's a great, great way to relieve, if not cure, sciatica, which is a major problem for a lot of people as they age.

Jon: But, anyway, back to your ballet career now Karin. Whereabouts did you train?

Karin: I trained, well, my initial training, was; like all little girls, or young girls; little classes in the local town after school or on a Saturday morning. They then went up from one class a week to probably two classes a week. I studied, I was at Grammar School, so I did my Grammar School education in Kent and then auditioned for various Dance Schools when I was about 15. My first place was at the school called The Legat School of Ballet which was an incredible, that's a boarding school, that's an incredible environment. It was an old monastery set in Sussex and I was very, very fortunate in that I

managed to get a scholarship to fund me for that because my mother was a single parent at the time so that sort of thing would have been completely out of her reach and my reach. So I went there for a short period of time and Kent County Council funded that for me. But then the school was not recognised by the Council any more because of, well, lack of funds, lack of funds, really. So then I auditioned for a couple more schools and I got a place at a school called The Andrew Hardy School of Dancing in South Kensington in London.

So, I went there for three years. It was a mixture of jazz, mainly ballet, a bit of tap which I actually loathed believe it or not and still do to this day; some yoga; all sorts of aspects - character dancing which I absolutely loved you know ...

Jon: What is 'character dancing'? Sorry.

Karin: Character dancing is where you learn traditional Russian dances; peasant dances, Italian dances like the Tarantella, Czech dances, Hungarian dances. Loved that. Loved that.

Jon: Quite an eclectic mix!

Karin: Yeah. Big, squishy skirts and lovely little shoes and you could just kind of show off, you know, you can just be comfy whereas with the ballerina type of life you're kind of a bit more sort of sedate and a bit more graceful and elegant.

Jon: So, really, the course you did sounded a bit like the fusion that you offer.

Karin: Yes, absolutely.

Jon: Now, what brought you to Brittany? It's quite a jump from South Kensington to near Saint-Mayeux.

Karin: I've always had a love of France. I always had a slight itinerant travel thing in me and I knew a couple of people in Brittany and I decided that my time in England was up. I like the lifestyle of the French people and really, I just wanted to come here for my latter years - for my swan song I suppose.

Jon: So what is it in particular that you like about this part of Brittany?



Karin: What do I like about this part of Brittany. I like the rolling hills, where I live, and the scenery. I like that slight spiritual feel to it, I think. Obviously the rose granite coast I think is absolutely outstanding to see and be at. The food, the wine, of course.

Jon: Karin - thank you very much.