

**Simon interviews: Sophie Caudin, teacher turned musician**

Simon: Hi, Sophie, and thanks for coming in and talking to Spotlight on Brittany.

Sophie: Hi. Simon, it's a pleasure.

Simon: So you have an interesting story. Um. You were a teacher for many years.

Sophie: Yes.

Simon: And then you decided to not be a teacher anymore.

Sophie: Yes.

Simon: Do you want to start by explaining what what you did and how it happened?

Sophie: Er. I was a teacher since er 17 years. So it's er, it's a long way. But in fact, I, I never decide to to become a teacher. It was er you know, sometimes life arrive. You go in a way.

Simon: Yeah, yeah.

Sophie: And in fact it's, it was an opportunity. I decide to to try. And I really like this opportunity. I think it was a a good job. It er, I take pleasure for for teaching, and.

Simon: And you were you were teaching what?

Sophie: It was er music.

Simon: Right.

Sophie: I teach. I, I taught.

Simon: Taught.

Sophie: I taught some some music. And er I take very big pleasure to to make a big er show with children and er but it was not me all the same. And er in fact, er one day I say me, um, I want to make another thing.

Simon: Okay.

Sophie: Um.

Simon: And that other thing was to be a musician.

Sophie: Yeah, but in fact er it was a dream, but er I didn't imagine er I can do that.

Simon: Okay.

Sophie: Er, I, I really love that this job during er 15 years. And to last year er finally, I have no passion for for teaching. Er, it was not the same, je ne sais pas.

Simon: Okay. So, so the thing is, you, you, you wanted to become a professional musician intermettent de spectacle.

Sophie: Um not yet.

Simon: But you wanted, that's what you wanted to become.

Sophie: Yeah, yeah.

Simon: And so when we think, certainly English people think of changing a career or changing a job, it's just simply a matter of saying, "Oh, I'm not going to do this anymore. I'm going to do that". But it seems in France, it's not that easy. So tell us, tell us a little bit about the process of not being a teacher anymore. That was quite an ordeal I think.

Sophie: Ah, that's very difficult, because er when you are a teacher, you have um a statut. Er you have a condition.

Simon: Right.

Sophie: You have er you have a good job, you have er money. Eh, of course, um not a lot people want to be a teacher now in France, but, um but you you have a good situation.

Simon: Yeah.

Sophie: And er and I, I was a teacher since er since I stopped my study, study,

Simon: Yeah.

Sophie: So er I never made another thing.

Simon: Yep.

Sophie: And at er 40 years old, I say me Ooph, I don't want to to stay in this situation. I don't want to stay in this job to be a teacher, because er I, I, I can't now. I, I don't know why, but I can't. But um, but what can I do? I never made another thing. Er I have no competence. Ah, if I go away, I have I will have no money. I have a house, I have children. What really can I do for, it it's a very difficult choice, and I know a lot of people er er are afraid to to make this change.

Simon: Because it's a very secure job a teaching job.

Sophie: Yes. It's a security job.

Simon: Yeah.

Sophie: Yeah. And to decide to make another thing, um wow. When you you must pay the house every month.

Simon: Yeah, yeah.

Sophie: When you have children, when you have everything, you say, wow, er maybe, er maybe it's um it's just a a dream

Simon: Yeah.

Sophie: To change, but really.

Simon: Reality is different.

Sophie: Yes.

Simon: Okay, so that's the same in any country. Obviously, if you if you're going to go into a job, that's not secure, musicians job certainly isn't secure. But the interesting part, I think, is the bit you told me about the fact that you can't just say, one day I'm going to stop being a teacher and be a musician.

Sophie: Yeah, in fact, it it was er during one year. I know I, I want to stop this job. Maybe more, but since one year, I say me okay. Er I, I know er I can't make this job, but I can't go away. It's not possible. And er I er. Okay. I continue. My my body send me a message. You know, I was very bad. But okay. Nobody knows that. And er in January, I go in er, it's not holiday it's er voyage scolaire. You travel with children.

Simon: Yeah.

Sophie: Er it was great. We was in mountain. Er we make ski. So it was, normally, it was a dream. You make ski with children, who you have very good er colleague.

Simon: Yes.

Sophie: And you you pass very good time. But in fact, I was, again a teacher. I make the mother of children during the travel. And in fact, it was, er er I don't know the the, in English, it's the same expression, but la goutte d'eau, la goutte d'eau qui fait déborder le vase .when you add a little part of water.

Simon: Yes.

Sophie: And and it.

Simon: Ah, overflows, okay, yeah. So in in English, we'd probably say the final straw. It's the last thing that pushes you over the edge.

Sophie: Yeah. And when I come, OK, I made er everything good in this er in this travel, but when I come.

Simon: When you returned.

Sophie: Yeah, when I return my house, I start to to cry and cry and cry, and I know I can't go away.

Simon: No, you can't continue.

Sophie: Yeah, I can't.

Simon: Can't continue.

Sophie: I can't continue.

Simon: Yeah. So tell us about the actual bureaucratic process, cos that's the bit that really struck me, that that that the paperwork of just stopping being a teacher. I mean, of course, it's you're going to an insecure job, musician or whatever you would be doing, you didn't know. But it's not just as simple as saying, "Okay, I, I don't want to be a teacher anymore".

Sophie: No, it's not er. Of course, it it was not easy, because er when you are a teacher er you are in, you have a job in the government, and er for stop this job, it's very difficult. So um er when I I I just had to fin. My my doctor say, "Okay, you can't go for the moment", so I have a a for three, three.

Simon: A medical.

Sophie: Yes.

Simon: Stop yeah so.

Sophie: A medical for three weeks.

Simon: Yeah.

Sophie: And after it was holiday, so cool. And er I I call everybody for say, I can't continue. Er, but the first reaction was, er I'm very surprised. They say "you must stay a teacher. You can er have a medical er paper for one year, for for

but er don't go away". But I want to make another thing. I I don't want to to to to be er.

Simon: No, you don't want to just be off sick.

Sophie: No, I want to to be better.

Simon: Yes.

Sophie: But I don't want to stay in this job.

Simon: Right.

Sophie: So as I say, okay. And I I decide to make a disponibilité. It's um you can er during one year or one, two, three, four, or five year, you can decide to to put a dispos a disponibilité. It's er you have nothing. You have no money. You have no no right to make a formation.

Simon: Right.

Sophie: You have no right to something. You can work, but you, but you you make every thing alone. You have no, no, no, course, no, no, nothing. And er, er but if you decide to come again in er to be a teacher.

Simon: Yes.

Sophie: You can.

Simon: So it's like taking, I think it'd be a sabbatical in in English, it might be, where you could take time out without losing your job.

Sophie: Yeah.

Simon: So you can go and do something else, but you're still a teacher.

Sophie: Yeah.



Simon: On leave, extended leave maybe.

Sophie: Yeah.

Simon: I don't know.

Sophie: Yeah.

Simon: Okay.

Sophie: Yeah.

Simon: But you didn't want to do that.

Sophie: Yes, I made that.

Simon: Oh, you made that, OK.

Sophie: Yeah. I made that because, er because, in fact, er you have three choice. You make a démission. You ask um er er that disponibilité, that I I say or you want er une rupture conventionnelle.

Simon: OK.

Sophie: But for la rupture conventionnelle, you must er, you must make a disponibilité before.

Simon: So a rupture dispon, er rupture conventionnelle is when you leave.

Sophie: When you leave. But every part are agreed.

Simon: OK.

Sophie: So it's an arrangement.

Simon: Okay. So they can say no, they can say.

Sophie: They can say no.

Simon: So it's possible that they could say "No, I'm sorry, but you have to stay a teacher".

Sophie: Yeah.

Simon: OK.

Sophie: Yes, they can say that.

Simon: This is the interesting part I think..

Sophie: And er if, if you you don't really, if you really don't want er to stay, you can make a démission but you have no chômage.

Simon: OK

Sophie: You have nothing.

Simon: OK.

Sophie: You have no arrangement. So it's very difficult to to leave. And you, ah when you decide to leave, ah that's that's a very big thing in France. You lost er your your le concours. You you when you decide to to be a teacher you passed a concours.

Simon: Yeah, a course, like a formation or?

Sophie: Yeah, but but a formation, you must be er in the top for other job.

Simon: OK.

Sophie: How do you say that?

Simon: An examination.



Sophie: Yeah, it's an examine. And er so you you fight you for have the examine. After you can continue to be a teacher.

Simon: Right.

Sophie: And you have the er, you have everything, because you are you've in the paper you are a teacher. If you decide to leave this, to leave and to become other thing.

Simon: Yes.

Sophie: If you don't make a disponibilité,

Simon: Yes.

Sophie: You you lost your exam.

Simon: OK.

Sophie: So if I decide to to leave.

Simon: Yeah.

Sophie: I lost my exam. Er I lost er money, I have no chômage, I have nothing. I have no no right for course.

Simon: Right.

Sophie: And er I can't come again.

Simon: So that's right. So you, so if I get understands correctly, if you leave in that way, you have no right to go back and be a teacher in five years if you

Sophie: Yeah.

Simon: Wanted to. So if it's done with everybody agreeing, you could go back to teaching because you're still qualified.

Sophie: Yeah, but you.

Simon: If you do it that way, you don't, you lose your qualification.

Sophie: Yeah, you lose your qualification.

Simon: Yeah.

Sophie: And you you can't come er from er I, I well, you you lose your qualification. It's if like I never teach.

Simon: Yeah.

Sophie: And I'm a again a new teacher.

Simon: Yeah. That's the crazy thing. So OK, take us through the next stage. So you you went on the disponibilité.

Sophie: Yeah.

Simon: And then what happened?

Sophie: Er, I met a musician and I I decide to work with him. And er we start a gig. And I say, me OK, it's it's er the way I want. I want to make er finally. I take concerns er. I make my dream before er a travaille with children I make my dream. I put them on stage

Simon: Yes.

Sophie: But in fact it was my dream.

Simon: It was your dream.

Sophie: Yes.

Simon: To be on the stage. And you were helping others to do what you wanted to do.

Sophie: Yes.

Simon: Yes.

Sophie: So er when I start gig with with the musician I meet

Simon: Yeah.

Sophie: I decide to to continue in this way and I, I went in Nantes er in um it was un salon.

Simon: Like a a convention?

Sophie: Yeah. Like a convention and I I learn everything about er intermittent du spectacle.

Simon: Right.

Sophie: And er it was very interesting. But I understand I can't er stay in disponibilité if I want this job. I must er stop er the career of er teacher.e

Simon: Yeah.

Sophie: Because if I was in disponibilité and I start gig and er le cachets d'intermittence.

Simon: Yes.

Sophie: In September, when I will ask again a disability, I will lost all of my gig.

Simon: OK.

Sophie: All of my cachets. So er so I can't stay in this position, so I decide to to stop, ready to be a teacher, and I ask um un rupture conventionnelle.

Simon: Right. So that's when you officially say, "OK, with your agreement".

Sophie: Yes.

Simon: With their agreement. "I don't want to be a teacher anymore. You have to agree, so I don't lose anything".

Sophie: Yeah.

Simon: And then yeah.

Sophie: Yeah. But um er in fact, I lose to I lose er my my qualification.

Simon: You lose your qualification anyway.

Sophie: Yeah.

Simon: That's extraordinary. So, I I mean, I'm, I think I'm right in saying that in England, if you're a qualified teacher, and you decide to go and tour the world for five years, when you come back, you're still a qualified teacher. But you're saying that because you've left, you're no longer a qualified teacher.

Sophie: No.

Simon: You'd have to take that exam all over again.

Sophie: Yeah.

Simon: So that's, that's interesting, yeah. So, okay.

Sophie: That that's very difficult for for teacher, because er you you don't know what will happen.

Simon: Yeah.

Sophie: And er when they say me, "OK, you must er, you must make that and lose your qualification".

Simon: That's a big decision.

Sophie: It's big decision. Of course, I cry a lot.

Simon: But you took that decision.

Sophie: Yeah.

Simon: So it's very brave. So ah ah you said you you started deciding not to be a teacher at 40 and I think is it you're 41 now, or?

Sophie: Yeah. 41.

Simon: Yeah. So at 41 to change your career is okay, people do it. But in your case and in in France, it seems that this is more than just a decision of wow I'm going to change my whole career. This is actually burning your bridges, we call it.

Sophie: Exactly.

Simon: So you say, OK, I spent nearly 20 years being a teacher, and I have a qualification. I'm secure for life if I want to be, but if I decide to do something else, I'm not able to, that's all, it's gone, it's finished, and that's what you did.

Sophie: Yeah.

Simon: That's incredibly brave isn't it.

Sophie: I was afraid. Pray I was very, very afraid. I I cry a lot, because when you make this decision and family, I I have the chance to have a a family very big supporter, but er of course er my parents love, love me and are very proud of me now, but when I say them, I will leave the condition that I have.

Simon: Yeah.

Sophie: For be a a musician. Er they they say, 'Wow, are you sure?' And they they was very afraid.

Simon: Yeah.

Sophie: So er. So it was not a a um, it was not a er easy choice.

Simon: Not at all, no. And so this is now, what, one year on, one one and a half years later, since, since you did the rupture conventionnelle

Sophie: Er less one half, oh less.

Simon: Less than a year.

Sophie: One year.

Simon: One year OK.

Sophie: One year, yeah.

Simon: So let's, let's wrap it up. And so, how is it going? How? How? Because, in order to become an intermittent de spectacle, you have to do 43

Sophie: Yeah.

Simon: Cachets a year?

Sophie: Yeah.

Simon: And you are now at the point where that's looking like it's going to happen.

Sophie: Yeah.

Simon: Quite soon.

Sophie: Yeah.

Simon: So you've taken that decision. You've burnt your bridges.

Sophie: Yeah.

Simon: But fortunately, you landed on dry land.

Sophie: Yeah.



Simon: If that's not mixing it up a bit. So that's fantastic. So. Well, thank you very much for talking to us. I think that's a really inspiring story, because I'm sure there are people out there in all sorts of jobs who who think, "Oh, I really want to do something different". And you've done that at the point in most people's careers where they think, "OK, I've done 20 years. I do 20 more, and then I have my retraite. And I'm happy. I have a lot of money or good money", and you said, "Nope, that's not good enough for me".

Sophie: No, we must make what we really want to to make in the life. It it's short, so we we need.

Simon: Absolutely.

Sophie: To be.

Simon: Well, that's a really inspiring story. Thank you very much for talking to us  
Sophie:

Sophie: Thank you to you.