



Flee Fly Flow

2008

INTERVIEW to

Nicolas and Morgane DUCHAMP

Authors

NCP: How did you decide on the story for “Fly Flee Flow”?

ND: Ten years ago we created a new and light concept arranged by Morgane for a flute and clarinet dialogue based on existing famous arias in order to make classical music known to all.

Progressively along the daily symphonic and chamber concerts we did, we had the feeling that the public of tomorrow might disappear. To keep the adult public for classical concerts it is necessary to take care of the young audience which is the public of the future. In this domain it is therefore necessary to innovate and democratize.

We started to work on a concept of fifty minutes in which 3 years old children and older can start discovering and loving classical music in a funny way.

NCP: What skills did you use to create “Flee Fly Flow”?

ND: to build this kiddy show we needed all the skills, talents and studies we accumulated throughout all the years of our professional lives. We studied at the best musical institutions of France, and got several first prizes. Since 1987 we have been giving concerts all over the world and started teaching music to the youngest and came to the conclusion that in our own musical education there was a lack of such a show.

We use accessible music, short pieces, simple staging to attract the eye, make

children participate actively, we dance and use simple amusing objects to enhance the visual side of our shows, we use special effects with lights if the hall permits us. This cocktail of explosive ingredients makes children enjoy meeting Mozart, Verdi, Schumann and others more intensive!

NCP: How did you choose the music selections that you use in “Flee Fly Flow”?

ND: Two things seemed important at first. We had to base the project on the classical pieces known by parents and teachers and by this means already create a link with the ears of the children. (Classical Music used on TV for advertising, movies, and more popular songs)

Secondly we had to create a link in between events that occur in life used as subject in our show and used as theme in classical pieces. For examples, anger in the show will be translated by the music of Mozart with the aria of “the queen of the night” in “Magic flute”. Another good example could be a love scène out of Verdi’s Libiamo from “La Traviata”. The children will by themselves acknowledge the link between reality and classical music.

NCP: Where were the first performances held?

ND: The first performance was given in Lille, in northern France, now the European capital of culture. A large French organization supporting the diffusion of music for young people was interested in testing it for the first time in front of about 400 children with a view to booking us for a large number of concerts in France.

It was a great success with the children, but, at that time, the organizers were asking us for a format for the show which did not correspond with our approach.

We went our own way and, shortly afterwards, we were booked by a Paris theatre for 3 months. The public showed up and most of the French press was extremely interested in the show. It was a huge success and we ended up spending 18 months at the theatre!! Today, the public still asks for the show at this theatre!! Since then, we have performed about 800 times all over France, Quebec and West Africa.

NCP: Did you use your own children as a test audience?

ND: The presence of our own child, Capucine, who at that time was 3 years old, was naturally a great source of inspiration and, also, it could be said, a means of “testing” reactions. Entering the world of children through a child’s eyes controlled by our own adult eyes was one of the secrets behind the success of “Flee Fly Flow”; so thank you Capucine Duchamp !

NCP: How long have you been performing “Flee Fly Flow”?

ND: We have not really stopped since 2000

NCP: Do you see different reactions from audiences in different countries? How was the audience in Canada different than the audience in France?

ND: I will start with the reactions shared by all the children we met during the performances, namely more than 100,000 children to date. A sense of magic brought on by the addition of words, and the performances of the actors and musicians which we are, was apparent in 99.9% of the cases. It was interesting to see that children, despite obvious cultural differences and inevitably very different personalities, react unanimously when the imagination is stimulated, when the door of beauty is opened; eyes widen and smiles light up faces.

Differences in reactions are related to the environment in which the children develop. When we present “Flee, Fly, Flow” castle at the start of the show in Quebec, we know, from the children’s wonder, that there are few castles in Quebec! And, even less in Africa!! Mozart in Senegal is completely removed from the local culture, but the music’s beauty still has an effect and that is what is important. “Flee, Fly, Flow” opens doors, it is an entrance, an Ali Baba’s cave for children who are lucky enough to see the show.

NCP: Do you have other musical shows for children and can you tell us about them?

ND: The show’s success has enabled us to put together a theatre and concert company, Cap Musique.

Today, we are proud of generating more than 50% of our turnover with children’s shows. Today, Morgane has created two shows based on children’s songs: one based on the life of the inhabitants of an apartment block and its follow-up, the latest show, “Morgane court la campagne”, which has just been performed at the Avignon Festival more than 30 times.

This show based on simple tunes is a story about farm animals and requires interaction with the children. An extract can be seen on www.capmuse.com.

We have another great show written around Antonio Vivaldi’s Four Seasons: “4 saisons magiques”. It involves 14 magic tricks based on Vivaldi’s music arranged for flute and piano. This show is in the process of becoming one of our greatest hits, especially in Quebec where it will be performed widely in 2009 and 2010.

With Olga Vassileva, we have written a musical show based on French poetry. We are also contacted by a growing number of people for tailor-made shows written to orders received from organization X or Y.

NCP : Did you change things since you create the show ?

Of course! But, the core and the original outline have never changed. What has changed is our way of performing it. We go much further into the details of comic acting in order to continue to improve the way in which we transmit the concert's idea, with, in general, a touch of humor, essential to an attractive, innovative and educational show. A journalist from a major French review (Télérama) wrote: "we are going to have some serious fun" and we feel that sums it up well.

NCP: Have you ever performed "Fly Flee Flow" in the United States before?

ND: No, it is our first time in the United States and we are proud to be performing here in North Carolina. I would particularly like to thank Mrs Barbara McEnzie who believed in this show and who, through her decision, has shown an open spirit which, I am sure, will make a great contribution to the children of North Carolina and in all the States of America which, I hope, will play host to us.

You landed in France in 1944 in order to liberate us and I would like to invade the United States with my shows with the support of the children of America!

I also forgot to say that, in France, there have been some truly memorable performances for adults who, by all accounts, found it irresistible!

NCP: Do you have special memories of a specific performance?

ND: There is one particularly funny story ... We were in northern Senegal, assigned by the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs to perform a show. The theatre was a restaurant which had been converted for the occasion and there were about a hundred children present. During the snake charmer scene, when Morgane conjures up a plastic snake with a fishing line, panic broke out among the children. They thought that it was a real snake! This type of game is not funny in Africa, but, of course, we had not thought of that! The children were trying to get out of the room through the windows and all the possible exits!!" We were stunned! We decided to remove this scene from our future shows in Africa!

NCP: Which title do you prefer "Duo Amoroso" or the "Duchamp Duo" for newspaper articles?

ND: Duo Amoroso/Duchamp that way everyone is happy and it is the closest to the mark and the most explicit!!

Paris ,2008

You can see

<http://flyflee-flow.blogspot.fr/>

French website:

www.capmuse.com