

CORINNE GIBBONS: A SINGER'S JOURNEY

Corinne Gibbons. Singer, Song-writer, Independent Artiste. Entrepreneur who founded Singapore Sing - runs a corporate team building company which uses choral singing to inspire and energise staff. Corinne has just launched her new album Melt with a 3 night performance in Singapore. She then performed to a crowd of over 30,000 people at Summer Solstice 2009, Stonehenge in the UK. She is now taking her music to New York, Los Angeles, Toronto, Sydney, Perth and Vienna. And that's just the beginning.

CONFUSION ABOUT THE PATH

How did you decide on singing as a career?

When I left school, I applied for a cadet journalist job and, and I got that cadetship. I also applied to take music at university and I got into university too. I was then torn; I didn't really know which one to take because it's practical to take the journalism job because I'll get paid straight away and it's a great skill to have. But yet I really loved singing.

I remembered sitting on my front steps of my house. I was crying.

MAKING A LIFE CHANGING DECISION

My mother asked me what I was crying for, and I said, "Well, I don't know what to do." And she said, "Well, what would make you happy?" "If I could sing, I would be so happy." She reassured me ' You should go to the university."

I went to university. It was being around alot of really talented musicians that I knew this is what I'm supposed to do.

SURVIVAL

What kind of advice would you give to someone who dreams of becoming a singer or musician? How can you strike it out and survive?

If you're still in school, find people that you absolutely enjoy working with. And then form a group. Surround yourself with other creative people. It really helps to have a supportive community around you. That's one of the most important piece of advice I'd give to young people.

If you have finished school and you really want to pursue a career in music, get yourself a little regular gig somewhere. Perfect your craft. It's by far the most positive thing that you can do. In fact, there is a growing support for local musicians and the arts.

If you don't want to do live performances, look at ways that you can explore the music industry, either through recording or writing for other people.

I do a lot of different things to support myself here as a musician. I am touring, I'm writing music for Singapore Repertory Theatre, I'm writing music for a documentary, I am also writing for films.

What would you call the lowest point in your life?

When I lost my sister. She was my closest friend as well. Nothing compares. Our relationship was so potent. I'm so thrilled I had 27 amazing years with her. That's how I see it now. At that time, I didn't even know how to breathe. Now I have a much deeper empathy for the world.

A NEW COUNTRY

What motivated you to come to Singapore?

When I first came to Singapore, I was on my honeymoon. We were only going to stay a few days. But my ex-husband, who was then my new husband, he met some people when we first arrived on the very first day and they invited us to this gig. There was an incredible singer, Mildred Jones. And I was sitting in the crowd, when she announced "We happen to have a young Australian singer in the crowd....Would you like to come up and sing a song?" I was surprised, but with some encouragement, got up and sang one song. After the song, she turned around and said, "Honey child, you got a beautiful voice but you got to lower your keys.

"Oh, Really?" I wondered. She asked "What's the next song you're going to do?" "Oh, I hadn't planned on singing tonight" "Oh come on you know heaps of songs."

I came up with the song and she lowered it fourth from the key that I sang. She helped me discover my low register, because I've got quite a low voice. She really was quite instrumental in helping me find that voice.

She later connected me with Bryan, a fantastic base player, I went to an event of his, and got connected with another band who played at Western Stamford. Instead of a few days, I ended up staying ten days. And meeting so many different people.

Fast forward to year 2006. There was a point when I really wanted to leave Australia because though I know so many people there and love the country, I needed the space and solitude to write melt.

Corrinne's latest album melt is infused with pop, rock, Celtic, country and a little smooth jazz with a twist

TAKING STOCK OF LIFE

There was one night were I sat up and wrote down everything that was important in my life on a personal level. And I also wrote down everything that I wanted to achieve on a professional level. Two years later I look back and I actually ticked everything on the list. Except one thing. I'm still working on that, gives me something to work towards.

And I hadn't even referred to the list during those 2 years. I realised that just by writing down what was truly important to me, my subconscious then knew where I was going to head.

So, write down what you want. On a personal level and a professional level. It's really important to have both.

Who are the people who have contributed immensely to where you are now?

As a creative person, you sometimes don't have all the business acumen, to commercialise what you do. So it's important to build a team around you, who believes in you.

I also genuinely like the people I surround myself with. I like this gray area between fun and work. Laugh and work just enjoy life.

I've had lots of things happen in my life. Every single thing that's happened, whether it's positive or negative, has emotionally empowered me.

MAKING IT AS AN INDEPENDENT

How do you make it work as an independent artist, as opposed to being under a record label?

A label is great because they have the entire infrastructure. But, I'm sort of looking outside the square there. With the Internet, you can now do so much as an independent artist. Which is fantastic. The main thing for musicians to address is the distribution, your radio play, and your touring schedules.

What you really need is an agent, or a promoter. You have to have those connections. And you can do online distribution which is the way a lot of things are going these days. I'm going through all of that now. Because my album's only been out two months.

I never wrote any of the songs thinking they have to finish in three minutes so that it can be played on radio. But somehow radio still picked up my songs.

I released the album in Singapore first. Because this is now where I live; this is where I work and wrote most of the album.

THE STRUGGLE FOR FUNDING

How did your vision of having an album become reality?

I met my executive producers through my landlord, who often invites me to dinner when they're collecting the rent. That's how I met Robin and Bojan. I'm really grateful for her connecting us up.

We all kept in touch. Bojan even invited me to sing at his housewarming. I gave him a gift of 2 songs.

Bojan and Corinne became friends, and that's when they started the Choir Training Company together. But deep down inside, Corinne had always had the idea of having her very own album - melt. She also kept evading Bojan's questions of when her album will be out.

I said to him, "Well, look, you know, it will come out. And I will record it," I said, "But I do need to get some funding for it. You know, because I can't actually fund it myself at this point. If I could, I would be in the studio tomorrow. I said, "So it will happen and I know that that's going to happen. I have been putting aside any fears so that it will happen. But that was a constant question from him.

Robin was the one travelling alot. There was one time we finally met up. He asked me "So when is your album coming out? When are you going to be doing it up?" Déjà Vu. I said, "I need to get funding for the album. It will happen, but it is going to take a little bit of time. He asked "How much would it cost?" I said, "I think this will cost this much."

SERENDIPITY

I had a really intense conversation with Robin. It was a very personal conversation. It was then I got to know him a lot better. That night he wrote me an email, and said, "We think you are a wonderful person and we would really love to support melt, and so if we could put a budget together, we would really love to explore producing the album'

It still think that moment is amazing. Bojan and Robin have become two of my dearest friends. The team that's put melt together is like family.

LOVE

I encourage people to work with people they really enjoy working with, in any field.

Because sometimes the long hours can be taxing. But when you're with people that you enjoy working with, you can just have a laugh or two. And that's great.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

How do you keep in touch with all the many people in your life?

For my close personal friends, I keep in touch with them over the phone. Or on Skype or I-Chat. Or face to face.

A lot of people want to know what I'm up to and that is not my forte to keep up to date with that. I'm not great with Face Book. I'm not even great with text messages. As for email, I see it largely as a business tool.

That's when I have to tell you about Bojan. He is amazing! He handles 90% of my communication. He keeps everything up to date. He's got a separate blog for me too and he's updating that daily *Snaps fingers* He's got a really brilliant way of communicating and he is the connector for a lot of these people that we're meeting.

I think I need a Bojan too!

Everybody needs a Bojan, as far as I'm concerned.

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

You just came back from Stonehenge performing to over 30,000 people, and are scheduled to be in New York, Los Angeles, Sydney, Perth, Vienna. How did you create all these international opportunities?

I'm so fortunate that I have the team I'm working with. We're all quite connected in different ways within the music industry. I'm doing commercial tours. I'm also doing tours with event companies. I will be performing at the Annual Meeting of ASAE (American Society of Association Executives) to 8,000 of their members in Toronto next month. I'm so excited and thrilled about this opportunity to showcase my work. Bojan organised this.

I've had so many introductions to people. I know quite a few people in the commercial industry as well. Its about hooking with the right promoter and the right agent to manage your overseas shows.

Enjoy the video montage of melt

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Corinne Gibbons: A singer's journey



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- Develop a personal brand and network in a professional setting
- Identify and leverage your strengths and skills
- Build a strong professional network
- Master the art of networking
- Gain confidence and skills in networking

Key Takeaways:

- Master the art of networking
- Gain confidence and skills in networking
- Build a strong professional network