

LISETTE PAYET – A MUSICAL JOURNEY WITH A FRENCH ACCENT

I've been in the entertainment industry for most of my life. I suppose my dad was the musical influence as he played guitar and sang. He got me started performing at parties from the age of five. All I remember is someone would pass the hat around and everyone throwing in some money, which of course I never saw.



I then joined Lou Toppano's music school to study classical guitar. I recall the big annual concert at Melbourne town hall where Dick Cranbourne was the compare and Patti McGrath (Newton) presenting trophies. At that time my mum took over chauffeuring me to my new guitar and singing lessons. Suddenly I was appearing on TV shows like "The Tarax Show" and "The Happy Hammond Show".

By the age of nine I was full time on the popular children's TV show "Brian and The Juniors" singing and dancing. Dancing was not my forte so they kindly placed me behind so I could follow. This appeared on HSV-7 television every Sunday afternoon. Brian Naylor was host and Shirley Radford, whom I admired immensely, was the Musical Director. This was a fantastic learning experience for me.

In the mean-time I was still making money for my dad at these parties he always wanted to take me to. When the TV show folded I was 13. Now my dad had other things in mind for me. He needed a bass player for his French band (my parents' origin is Seychelles Island). So I was now the bass player.

At age 17 I began my first professional musical job in a band six nights a week as a singer/guitarist playing commercial country rock material. Eventually I moved to South Australia to join a band. I don't remember much that year; I must have been 19-20 years old. I joined an all-girl group doing Andrew sisters shows with (surprised I remember) Lisa Edwards (Johnny Farnham singer). When I returned to Melbourne I joined another cover band, "Select" with Marty Rose. I don't know how but I ended up playing keyboard!



Then I joined a band called "Survival" as the singer. The keyboard player, who later became my fiancé, began my education into jazz and classical. He wanted to venture into solo piano work in the hotel circuit and approached the agency for work. When they rang him for a job he panicked, told them he couldn't do it, with the excuse he wasn't ready so I took the job. That was the beginning of my solo piano bar career. I worked at the Sofitel 13 years, Melbourne 5, Rialto 3, Bayview and Eden On the Park 8 years, etc. I would do solo, duo, trio, or any formation required.

I went on a cruise for a holiday about that time on the Oriana and somehow I ended up doing a floorshow and singing in the band and my holiday was extended.

The last residency at The 5 star seafood restaurant in Port Melbourne "The Waterfront" every Sunday afternoon for 3 years. This was the greatest gig in town and I worked with some of the best musicians, such as Wilbur Wilde on sax, Michael Cristian on guitar, and I would have fill-ins such as Doug de Vries, Paul Williamson, Dave Nudick etc - it actually was quite intimidating working with these guys but again I learnt heaps.



Finally I decided to take on piano seriously and learnt classical, as I always dreamed of playing Chopin Waltzes. So I did 6th grade AMEB. And completed a diploma of music course last year to improve my teaching.

Currently I do such a variety of gigs from jazz (Jazzdrive) or commercial music with people such as Buddy England and Athol Guy (Seekers). A duo with Stockton playing more R&B

Then there is the Italian clubs playing chachas, tarantellas etc. Playing with my dad at those French dances turned out to be beneficial after all.