



Jennifer Juliette - Interview

Tell us about how you got your start in music.

I've always been passionate about music. My father is a Baptist minister. Growing up in the South Welsh Valleys, I started singing and playing the piano in my father's churches as a small child. And somebody in one of those churches, an organist, an amazing guy who taught me a lot of what I know, he noticed that I could sing. I was about 4 or 5 years old, and he started teaching me piano and how to sing and luckily it just expanded from there, because under the Welsh education system, if you have a talent, they nurture that and they help you at no cost.

I was very lucky to have all those influences around me who were willing to help me, were willing to nurture what I already had a little bit of. When I was in my early 20s, I moved to London. My plan was to be a model, and I was on the modeling track for a while. I made a lot of good connections, but it's demanding work, and I was really missing music and being part of an orchestra and in that environment full-time again.

And so I made a decision to switch gears and focus on my first true love — music and singing.

Where did your music journey take you?

Everywhere really. I've been really fortunate to get to play at some of the most prestigious venues in the world — the Sydney Opera House, the Vienna Opera House and the Royal Albert Hall in London.

Being part of an ensemble, learning from some of the very best musicians and singers out there today, was a privilege and an honour. But I also wanted to explore other opportunities and look for other outlets that inspire me professionally and help me to grow as an artist. Since moving to Berlin, I've been focusing on writing my own songs and evolving my brand and style. I am really excited about what the future holds.

How would you describe your personal style?

Classy. Elegant. Smart. Sexy. I like dressing up and putting on a bit of makeup every day. Even if I am not going anywhere in particular. Neutrals, block colours, close fits are my go-tos. I love to express myself in a certain way. I really like small, delicate pieces of jewellery that really mean something to me. Looking good makes me feel good. It helps shape my day; it helps shape my music. You could say my music style and personal style are one and the same.

On that note, I've decided to dip my toe back into modelling to see what's changed since my days on that scene. I recently wrapped a couple of photoshoots and have a few projects in the works, so stay tuned!

You have an EP coming out later this year. Anything you can tell us about that?

I do indeed, and I'm so excited to share some new songs with my fans. I'm planning to release the EP — my first — around summer. In addition to the title song, Anchor, I also have two other finished pieces that will be included: "Small Voice" and "I'll Be." Like many artists, I draw a lot on personal experiences when sitting down to write, and I am so grateful for the opportunity to release these little musical gems into the world.

Once we firm up the release date, I'll share the news on Instagram and my website.

What are your career goals?

I am often asked what my aspirations for my music are. Do I want to fill big stadiums? Do I want to be a star? I just want to touch a few people's hearts and show my daughters that they can follow their dreams.

I want to be seen as a mum who can do it all.

Juggling motherhood and career aspirations during the COVID era must be hard.

Motherhood is hard for sure, pandemic or no pandemic. And these days, it's especially hard to be a working mum. My children come first, always. But I've learned it's also important to have "me time": finding time for myself and for creating beautiful music.

We've been in a strict lockdown for months now. Being home with two babies has been challenging and fun. And it's also made me realize how crucial it is to carve out my own identity, in addition to "mum." Luckily, I've a great support system here, and I've been able to put aside a little time each day for singing and writing songs and playing my piano. And best of all, my daughters get to see me creating art. I feel like they are part of the process, too. They inspire me. Every day.

Do you miss Wales?

Wales is really lovely. I do miss it, my family, the landscape, but I need to feel inspired in other ways. I need to be out in the world. In Wales, there is a huge focus by the government on instruments, and it's kind of our heritage. Our whole national anthem in Wales is about being able to see the beauty in things. It's called "Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau," and it means "Old Land of My Fathers," like my forefathers, my old fathers, and all the things they were doing; how beautiful the landscape of Wales is; it is the land of poets and singers and musicians.

Where do you feel most at home?

Home for me is wherever my children are and the things that I have that really mean a lot to me here. I don't have that many material things, but what I do have I really treasure, so I have, for example, my beautiful piano that was a gift from my husband when we moved to Berlin, because I had just stopped my orchestra work and unfortunately, I really missed being able to play an instrument.

You started a choir in Berlin. How did that come about?

The Berlin Acabellas. It's a great group of women from all over the world. We officially formed over the summer of 2019. I was a new mum, and I found myself missing the camaraderie of being part of a music ensemble again, so I put out a call over Instagram to see if anyone else was interested in forming a choir, and I got 150 messages within an hour! I was really blown away by the response.

We were able to stage a few concerts and raised quite a bit of money for homeless shelters around Berlin before the COVID lockdown. I am looking forward to starting up again as soon as we safely can. In the meantime, I've written a few original pieces for the group that we've been able to produce virtually, which you can listen to on my Instagram Stories and YouTube channel.

Do you have a morning routine?

I make myself tea while everyone is still asleep. I usually have green tea, which is good for the voice. I take a few minutes to myself. I drink a few glasses of water. I take my vitamins. It's part of my morning warm-up. I try and warm-up a couple of times a day, because after I had the children, I wasn't working on offer anymore and so I had to make myself do it. No one was making me warm-up every day, so eventually I made a little routine for myself to help stretch my range. That's something you've got to do every day. It's like practicing an instrument. You've got to practice your voice every single day.

What gives you a sense of accomplishment?

A great day for me is when everybody is happy — when I've played my music, when the girls have seen some music. I like to feel like I've achieved something, and because the time I get to achieve something is in the morning, while the children are asleep, I need to feel that sense of achievement by 12 or 1 o'clock, otherwise it kind of sets my whole day wrong. So if I feel like I've gone over there, I've sung something. I've been inspired by beautiful weather and the view outside, then I just feel so lucky. It can be a small achievement. It doesn't have to be something big.

Tell us something frivolous about yourself. What do you do to relax?

My hobbies. I like to play video games. I used to play competitive games semi-professionally. Not a lot of people know that about me. At night, when the girls have gone to sleep, I sometimes will allow myself an hour to play video games. It helps me unwind.

I also used to play chess competitively. I still play with my husband from time to time.

Who wins?

Me. Unless I let him.