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“I look to the future”

Francine Jordi, the darling of the Swiss celebrity scene, is turning 40. An interview on setbacks with the “Stadl Show”, work on her new album and her optimistic nature.

BY MARKO LEHTINEN

Francine Jordi, you celebrate your 40th birthday in June. Do you have any special plans yet for the big day?

No, I always plan my birthdays close to the time. But I'll definitely be doing something with my family. I've also planned a hike, and anyone who would like to can come.

You are a woman who always looks young and to whom the years have been kind. How does it feel to suddenly reach 40?

I don't see it as a major turning point. I feel good and am grateful that I can still enjoy my life at 40. It hasn't felt painful so far anyway (she laughs).

You're currently working on a new album. Can you tell us anything about that?

Tommy Mustac, who has been my producer for many years, and I are in the

process of composing new songs and working through material offered to us by outside composers. We write lots of lyrics and melodies ourselves but also use songs by other people on my albums. The management company receives around 200 offers every time we start work on a new CD.

How do you select the “right” songs?

I rely entirely on gut instinct. Do I really want to sing this song? Are the lyrics suited to a mood that I can and wish to produce? It has to be 100 % right.

Do you like working in the studio?

It is different to on stage. I stand in front of huge crowds at concerts whereas working in the studio is a bit more intimate. I enjoy both and find the contrast exciting.

You began your career as a singer almost 20 years ago, while you have made the headlines more as a TV presenter in recent years. There have also been some difficult moments, such as when the international “Stadl Show” which you presented was pulled. With the benefit of hindsight what went wrong there?

It is hard to say. For the concept of a programme to work, the interplay between lots of elements has to succeed and it is sometimes impossible to pinpoint a specific reason or error that explains why a show is not so well received. The team behind the “Stadl Show” is the same one that is now producing the “Silvesterstadl” with me for the third time. That is still going and has gone down much better than the “Stadl Show”.

Yes, the “Silvesterstadl” got good reviews last year. And you'll be presenting it alongside Jörg Pilawa again. Does that compensate for the fact the “Stadl Show” flopped?

Compensation is not the right word. The fact that the “Stadl Show” didn't work was not primarily attributed to me. That's why I never took it personally. I would prefer to say that I'm really looking forward to the next New Year's Eve show. We had a tremendous amount of fun last time with the team and Jörg Pilawa. The atmosphere was fantastic. I also believe the format is important. You have to understand that there are no longer any big platforms on television for folk music.

You are surrounded by German colleagues on these shows. Do you think you're taken seriously as a Swiss presenter? Or are you sometimes mocked?

Mocked? Quite the opposite. I think my German colleagues were quite surprised at how fast I spoke and how much spirit a Swiss lady can show (she laughs). I feel very comfortable in that environment and get the impression that Swiss presenters are generally highly regarded in Germany and Austria.

Do you notice any difference in the way you and your German colleagues present shows?

No, I don't believe there is a typically German or Swiss way of presenting despite the different mentalities. It depends very much on the individual. Jörg Pilawa, who has a relaxed and light-hearted style, is very different to

Francine Jordi – born on 24 June 1977 in Richigen near Worb – began her career as a folk music singer. She won the “Grand Prix of Folk Music” for Switzerland in 1998 with the track “Das Feuer der Sehnsucht” the first time she entered the competition. A further milestone was her appearance at the Eurovision Song Contest in 2002 with the song “Dans le jardin de mon âme”. She later changed her style of music from folk to pop. Francine Jordi was awarded the Prix Walo – the Swiss easy listening music prize – six times between 1998 and 2006. Her CDs have gone gold seven times and platinum five times. The most recent studio album called “Wir” – which was her 14th – was released in 2015. It climbed to number 3 in the Swiss charts and number 6 in Austria.

Alongside her singing career, Francine Jordi has also been making a name for herself as a presenter for over 10 years. She has appeared on Swiss television alongside Bernard Thurnheer and Sven Epiney as well as on her own shows. She presented the “Stadl Show” on German, Swiss and Austrian television with Alexander Mazza and the “Silvesterstadl” with Jörg Pilawa.



Johannes B. Kerner, who comes across as rather serious and matter-of-fact. Thomas Gottschalk is entirely different again.

Let's go back to last year again – after the “Stadl Show” was pulled, your programme “Nur für Dich” on Swiss television did not really work either. It was taken off air after four episodes. Hand on heart, was there ever a moment when you considered giving up TV presenting and focusing solely on singing?

Absolutely not! Again, “Nur für Dich” didn't fail because of me as a presenter but instead due to the concept. It split opinion in a way. That is why I look to the future and the prospect of my next jobs in front of the camera. I am going to present another show on “Hessischer Rundfunk” in the summer, which I'm really relaxed about.

You're a very positive-minded person.

That is just my nature. I'm not someone who mopes about after setbacks. I try to learn from such situations and to take the positives out of them. But

I'm also tenacious. I wouldn't have had a 20-year career in show business otherwise.

You have the image of an exuberant, radiant woman. Isn't that a burden at times when things aren't going so well?

No, because I never put on an act. That's really who I am and when things are not going my way I prefer to step out of the limelight instead of shouting about my misfortunes from the rooftops. This may be why people rarely see a miserable Francine Jordi in public. And that is not my job either. I want to give people pleasure through my music and not broadcast my problems publicly.

It can nevertheless be difficult to step back if you're in the spotlight and appear in the tabloids. I'm thinking of the times, for example, when your marriage to Tony Rominger and your relationship with Florian Ast attracted great media attention. I have learned to accept that this is part of my profession. My life is very public and lots of things are written

“My German colleagues were surprised at how fast I spoke”: Francine Jordi is already looking forward to appearing on the next “Silvesterstadl”.

Photo: Thomas Buchwalder

and speculated about me. But I don't read everything that's written.

You're now turning 40. I'll end with the age-old question – if you could start your career all over again, what would you do differently?

Nothing. I always say that you don't make mistakes in life but only gain experience.