

Véronique Hermann Sambin

vocal



CREOLE

Her Story starts in Guadeloupe, the Caribbean island where her voice first resounded, in 1974. Véronique grew up at Le Moule, a town situated north-east of La Grande Terre, on the Atlantic coast. Nowadays it is very popular surfing spot, and previously, in the past, it was the settlement of the first Native American population, the Arawak people.

There's no point looking for a link between her childhood and present singing career. Nothing was seemingly noticeable at that point. At home, music was heard on the radio or on records, but neither played, nor sung by the family. Her grandparents were farmers, her father a manager of a small transport business. They listened to Cuban and Zouk music, her Dad danced to the Kadans by Les Aiglons or the Konpa by Coupé Cloué, and her Mum was more into Jacques Brel and Tina Turner. And everyone had dreams for Véronique. That she'd have a future with a good position...

This coloured mix of music and languages developed the girl's musical ear. The piano was her first musical playground, a loom on which she weaved her first melodies to exalt the lyrics she wrote. Firstly in French. Creole came later on. You didn't speak to children in Creole then. Times change. Children grow up. Her mind then freed itself, her consciousness awakened...

"I was drawn to music by the Creole language. I like both the body language and the legacy which go with it."

At the age of 17 she left her native country. She decided to set down her suitcases in Paris after stops in Munich and Antwerp, and obtaining a business school diploma. She worked for different companies, until 2008, when she decided to focus on her music career full-time.

In 2011, she staged the musical show "Calyps & Compagnie", and the electro-acoustic « Rasinovan », performance with other musicians, painters, poets; in which she set Paul Laurence Dunbar's Afro-American poetry into music.

JAZZ

Certain encounters can be a total awakening. Such was jazz for Véronique. In 1984, there was Weather Report's album "Sportin' Life", notably the Creole song named "Confians" by Mino Cinelu. In 1991, in a different style, "Unforgettable...with Love", sung by Natalie Cole. Followed by Ella Fitzgerald, in whom Véronique admires "such incredible energy and accuracy." Jazz came with its messengers. Take Xavier Richardeau, the saxophonist, for example. A decisive encounter in Guadeloupe. Having heard her sing with her guitar, he offered to arrange her compositions. He became her artistic director. Their complicity produced "Ròz Jériko", considered as "a complete success" in the French newspaper Le Monde. Roz Jeriko has been played at many concerts and festivals including Jazz In Marciac, New Morning Gwoka Festival (Paris), French Quarter Festival (Duc des Lombards, Paris), Martinique Jazz Festival (Martinique, West Indies)...Véronique's repertoire also includes jazz classics, with a preference for ballads. She is accompanied by exceptional musicians such as Alain Jean-Marie, Darryl Hall, Xavier Richardeau, Frédéric Nardin, Philippe Dervieux...

Three years after the release of her first album, Véronique Hermann Sambin presents "Basalte".



BASALTE

Everyone has a favourite gem. For some it's diamonds, sapphires, emeralds or rubies. For Véronique Hermann Sambin, it's basalt which makes her rock. She chose this hazy grey volcanic rock to entitle her second album, which has blossomed three years following her first album, "Ròz Jériko".

She attributes providential virtues to basalt, which are unveiled in an allegorical tale, told at the very end of this new stream of melodies.

A tale encouraging awareness, curiosity

Basalt is a volcanic rock which is abundant on the Island of Guadeloupe, Véronique's native country. It is a mineral to which very little importance is attached; unsurprising, given that it is the most common rock type in the world.

In the figurative tale written and performed by Véronique, basalt rock is used as an alarm. It provokes the jolt that keeps one awake, alert, or inquisitive. It makes meetings with others happen (Le Pas, Annou), captures the beauty of a smile or a melody (JWE), and prompts action to preserve the vulnerable beauty of the Caribbean Islands (Militanto, Roz Jeriko).

Through her tale, Véronique ranks basalt alongside precious stones, highlighting the way external or inherent factors significantly model our everyday lives, yet are abandoned, or go unsung (Glas-La, Love After Love). The singer helps us discover the hidden treasure beneath the superficial oceans created by fashions, cultures, and illusions (Pase, Si, Pwomes).

Recorded with an ideal quintet, « Basalte » is formed and arranged by both Frederic Nardin and Xavier Richardeau. In this album "rhythms and tempos fluctuate, along with moods. Each song has its own individuality," the singer explains. She wrote, as the "lyricist" and composer, almost all the songs. One can also hear a variation on the Lee Morgan's famous Sidewinder, and a poem ("Love After Love") by the Nobel Prize of Literature poet-playwright Derek Walcott, from Saint-Lucia. Although French and English are used in "Basalte", Véronique is true to her mother tongue, a sensual Creole, gracing the whole album with an "unheard" originality. Cut and polished with passion and conviction, « Basalte » is a gem to which time can only give its purest shine.

