

**My Life** Sept 30 2013

by Jean Humenry

**Back right after the war** when, to celebrate the return of peace, we used to sing, or whistle, at festivals for the fields or the vineyards, and above all in school, where I was a soloist in the chorus when I was six. The first family radio set on the mantle amazed me with the songs of **Jean Nohain** and **Mireille Hartuch**.

Later I listened to **George Brassens** in middle school, followed by the shock of **Jacques Brel** in high school.

**Rock arrived:** my first chords on a guitar encouraged me to start my first band, "**Les Narvals**".

Very soon thereafter, influenced by folk music and by **Woody Guthrie**, **Bob Dylan**, **The Kingston Trio** and **Peter, Paul and Mary**, at 17 I founded the folk group, "**Les Etrangers**", with my friends **Yves de Gaillande** and **Nils Lardé**. Our young trio was quickly supported by the listeners of **Sud Radio** and we opened for **Jacques Brel** and many other stars of the 60's. Several television appearances, three 45 RPM records on the **DMF** label, followed by a 33 RPM on the "**Reflets Studio SM**" label, consolidated our group.

**After studies in Modern Literature** at the University of Pau and my military service in Castelsarrasin, "**Les Etrangers**" and I went on tour with the gospel and spiritual singer, **John Littleton**. There I met those with whom we later formed the group "**Crèche**": **Bernard Haillant**, **Mannick**, **Gaëtan de Courrèges** and **Jo Akepsimas**.

**In 1970** I recorded my first album, "*Chansons comme ci, chansons comme ça*", with texts by **Jean Debruyne**, a worker-priest, surrealist poet and friend of **Jacques Prévert**. This album won the Rose d'Or de Douai-la-Fontaine. A second album in the same vein, "*Le Ciel d'en haut, le ciel d'en bas*", came out the following year and twice brought invitations to **Jacques Chancel**'s TV show as well as to participate in the Tréteaux de **Bobino** along with **Jean-Michel Caradec** and **Ganaël**.

**After leaving the group "Crèche"**, at the height of its success, I formed a new group, "**L'Equipage**", and brought out a new album, "*De face et de profil*". I also produced by first show in Paris at the **Théâtre de Trévisé**. In 1975 I built the first "home studio" where I recorded and produced several albums.

In 1978 Unidisc brought out the album, "*Le Monde n'est pas à ma taille*", under the direction of **Jack Ada** and **Michel Haumont**.

**Meeting the lyricist Frank Thomas** and the arranger **Jean Musy** shook up my artistic life and allowed me to sign a contract with the **Claude Carrère** label. Two albums, "*Fatima*" and "*Je cours dans la tête*" came out in 1981 and 1982. The song "Je cours dans ma tête" received a lot of airplay on France Inter. I toured widely in France and abroad. **Christian Le Guillochet** opened the doors of **Le Lucernaire** for me.

**I produced many songs and records for a young audience** including the famous "*Chansons et comptines de France*" for the **Audivis** label, awarded two gold records. For over twenty years I also spent a lot of time on writing workshops with children, writing and composing more than 450 songs.

In 1998 **Naïve** label brought out my self-produced album based on the poems of **Robert Louis Stevenson**, "*Jardin de chansons pour un enfant*", and in 2000 the album "*En voiture*", to critical acclaim.

In 2000 I produced two albums, "*J'attends*" and "*Voyageur*".

**In 2004 I was the victim of a cerebrovascular accident** which left me hemiplegic for a time. A long and patient struggle to make my way back was accompanied by work on reeditions and new publications. Thus, in 2005 the **Comme ci, comme ça** label brought out four CD-books entitled "*L'Univers de l'écocitoyen*", and, in 2006, as the result of a long collaboration with **Jean Debruyne** on the life of Robert Louis Stevenson, the CD-book "*Sur les pas de Robert-Louis Stevenson*" produced and directed by **Bernard Paganotti**. The **ADF-Bayard** label brought out a 4-CD boxed set anthology, "*Aussi loin qu'ici*".

My efforts at reconstruction oriented me towards writing.

**In 2010 the publisher DDB** brought out a collection of poetic texts, "*Mes horizons à 180°*", followed by an autobiographical account, "*Je n'ai jamais voulu faire pleurer les anges*".

**2011** saw my return with the production of a children's album, "*Chansons pour passer une bonne journée*", and my first album in eight years, produced and directed by my son **Charles Humenry**, "*Sans doute*".

**Since, I have been working** on writing projects and preparing a new album...

Translation by **Brian Thompson**.