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Simple, discreet and tender, singer Enzo Enzo (Krin Ternovtzeff) is the embodiment of French elegance and sophistication _ two attributes which have contributed to her tremendous success in Japan.

Enzo Enzo first found stardom in the early 1990s with Les Yeux Ouverts (Eyes Opened), a remake of Mama Cass' 1968 Dream A Little Dream of Me and the hit Juste Quelqu'un De Bien (Just a Nice Person), which earned her the 1995 Victoires de la Musique _ the French equivalent of a Grammy award.

Since then the singer has continued to charm old and new audiences with a voice that's as suave and velvet-smooth as one of her many charming outfits.

In Bangkok, this Friday, the French-Russian crooner will perform her latest album live for the first time. La jour D'a Cote (The Day At Your Side) was released a few months ago and brings together jazz, pop rock and latino music.

Q: Have you ever been to Thailand or Southeast Asia?

A: I have been to Japan many times and to Beijing, Korea, Taiwan and Vietnam. But I don't know this part of the Asian continent. I have images in my mind, which may come straight out of the windows of travel agencies.

Leaving aside the picture of a clear turquoise-blue sea with a rock standing in the middle, there are images of a certain smile of course ...

But I know one can only breathe, feel and fully understand a place by being there, experiencing it and unloading oneself of preset ideas. I have no expectations whatsoever, except to be able to make some kind of exchange, music-wise.

Q: What does discovering foreign cultures mean to you?

Destinations such as Japan for example, where I have gone for the past 10 years, are for us Europeans, combined with dreams. That's all the more so simply because they are so far away _ far from one's usual landmarks, far from places where one has a role to fulfil.

By being there, one moves away from those identities. One may feel a bit lonely but at the same time, only what is fundamental and essential in one's self remains. I think the further one goes, the more enriching the experience becomes, on a personal level. It is in this context that I have experienced true artistic motivation and open-mindedness.

Travel gives a kind of nobility to our work, to music. It allows us to experience the entire language of art. Each time, it is a new source of amazement for me.

Q: As a mother of two, has being a parent had any kind of repercussions on your work? It's interesting that your rise to fame in 1989 matched your first pregnancy, with your son Elliot.

On a personal level for sure, it taught me a lot. It may also have prevented me from getting lost in various sorts of illusions regarding the role of artists. I believe it's great to be criticised and questioned at home, so that one doesn't lock oneself up in myths about beauty, appearance, sensitivity, etc.

I think the extremely powerful love that one gives and receives as a mother helps me not to fall into certain traps. Perhaps it helps me find a lasting balance.

Q: For a few years now you have not been composing your own songs, but have relied on other writers' talents. Is it easy to go with other people's words and feelings?

It's not. I search a lot before being able to find a song. The day I say ``yes'' to one, I feel like throwing a party! It's very rare to find a sensibility and an ``interior'' compatible with my own.

I don't suffer by doing less writing or composing. I just wanted to spare

myself writer's block. Anyway, at my age (42) I don't think I have anything to prove any more. I choose to focus on my voice and my ability as a singer, and I search for as much happiness and sincerity as possible. But the problem when one doesn't write one's own song is that others tend to believe they can think for you and they tell you ``this is really you, it suits you perfectly''.

Q: In this album you use new musicians. Does that mean a page has been turned on your past?

For the time being, I'm not going back to my previous team, simply because I don't miss them enough. And working with the team who contributed to my last album is still very new. It's like we have only had a trial run.

Recording an album means going to sing in a studio and then shutting a door. I haven't lived through the album yet, it is still like a new-born child. I searched for it and found it, but I will ``live'' it only on the day I first take it on stage _ which will be in Bangkok.

Q: Have you really found yourself in this album?

I wasn't lost! But this album is indeed a great combination of the music I listen to and the music I want to sing. There is more simplicity, less constraint, there's sensuality, more sophisticated melodies and less complicated arrangements. It is simpler and more spontaneous than what I used to do. I am more natural in this album, and I cannot wish better for myself than simply knowing and being myself.

Q: You seem down-to-earth, easy-going, someone who makes time to enjoy life. How do you preserve these qualities, which are not exactly in line with today's speed-obsessed society, especially in the competitive world of entertainment?

We are what we are. We have no choice. Sometimes, you feel it is like a stone in your shoe, sometimes it's like a blessing. That's the life I choose to lead. I'm not very fond of the commercial side of my work and I don't think I am a very good strategist either.

I am discreet by nature _ actually that may sound a bit weird from someone

working in this field, and that trait doesn't make it easy when it comes to performing. But perhaps it is part of a charm some people may find in me. I believe there is enough room for every type of person in people's hearts. The only problem is that we are subject to close scrutiny from the media, who tend to decree what fashions and attitudes should be.

Q: Do you share the dream of so many artists to make a name for yourself all over the world and in the United States in particular?

I stopped long ago trying to follow my sales figures. That doesn't interest me, really. There is something deep inside that I don't want to flatter, neither to harm ...

Of course, I want to continue touring the world and to give concerts in Poland, Germany and elsewhere, but I have no intention of starting to sing in English. That's the least of my preoccupations. Strangely, it may be precisely this that explains my success. So many artists try to resemble the music they hear, instead of focusing on their particular strength. I don't feel like dressing up like a cowboy in order to start another career. That is not of the slightest interest to me.

Being or remaining French holds no interest for me either. The interest lies in daring be what one truly is, which is already a lot.

What do you appreciate the most about your work as a singer?

I don't know. [Laughs.] I guess it's the fleeting moments of bliss, when you are close to the audience _ what in Spanish they call el duende _ something that's just passing, that you can long for, that enters people's interior lives, that enriches them by relieving them of worries for awhile.

There is also a true happiness in singing, a physical part of it, which has no equal _ unless perhaps, in physical love but that doesn't bear mentioning _ some moments of communion with other musicians, common inspiration. It's difficult to explain.

There's a kind of freedom because, strangely, artists are usually considered a different category of person.

Being an artist goes with having more tolerance and curiosity about others.
That explains the exuberance of some artists. But to me, it is also a big trap, into which many people fall and start wallowing and losing their heads. Apart from which, much of the time, it's really very unpleasant! To constantly question yourself, judge yourself, be judged, to show off, to be watched and, worse, examined _ to put yourself into scary financial peril ... But on the other hand, another good thing about this work is that it makes you travel.

Q: All in all, what do you truly aim at?

I have no material ambitions as such. I am not after any particular award or concert hall. My aim is to continue singing in the same vein, doing it to the best of my ability, having people coming to tell me after the show that ``something really nice happened there''.

My aim is also to turn my children into very balanced adults, because I think it is very difficult to raise children. My aim is to turn into a very smiley granny, curious, in love, in good health, etc!

And perhaps also to learn not to do anything. Not to desire anything, to know how to not bother yourself. That is an ambition! For which I guess, my ability to contemplate, to be curious, flexible, satisfied, should help me a great deal.

I believe dreams are dangerous, and a great source of unhappiness. Happiness to me lies in our ability to catch hold of every good portion of what already exists. We don't have to search very