

**“TRAVELLING
FROM MY ORIGIN
TO MY PASSION”**

Berklee
college *of*
music

Valencia Campus

Lyncia Pivert

MMus. in Contemporary Studio Performance candidate

Culminating Experience

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1. INTRODUCTION

- **Concept of the trip:**

The idea is to introduce myself as an artist, explain where my personal musical influences comes from, who I am musically, my background, and explain the main musical styles that built me.

- **Countries, musical cultures, difference, similarities and connection:**

We are going to go to the countries that represent my origin and my passion. I will describe these countries, discover what musical cultures are in these countries, show what the differences and the similarities between these musics are, how to connect them, and what is important to bring them together.

- **At Berklee: My process, my influences, my recordings:**

We are returning to Spain in order to explain my year at Berklee Valencia College of Music: What I found out at Berklee, my musical experiences, my recording project (the objectives, methodology, resources) with an explanation of my repertoire.

2. ABOUT ME

My name is Lyncia Pivert, I'm a vocalist and I was born in French Guiana, a French territory in South America.

I have just earned a Bachelor of Arts in Music in French Guiana and am currently enrolled in Berklee College of Music's MA Program in Contemporary Performance in Spain, which will be finalizing this July.

I attended music training for 10 years at the National School of Music and Dance in French Guiana. I've learned music theory, choral singing, violin and clarinet. I've learned classical music and the traditional music of my country.

From my childhood at church I practice praise and worship songs, which led me to learn Gospel music on my own. When I turned 18; I received gospel lessons and perfected my vocal techniques. This music is the most important part of who I am artistically speaking. Because of the gospel influence, I started being interested in r'n'b and soul music; which I now also enjoy.

These various influences permit me to have a rich musical language, but also to be able today to propose you this journey through these musical elements because they lead you directly to their country, their home, their history, their traditions and their roots. So now, please attach and adjust your seat belts, we are approaching our descent in our first destination: French Guiana.

3. MY ORIGIN: FRENCH GUIANA

3.1. Geographically:

- French Guiana is in the North-East of South America, between Surinam and Brazil and constitutes a French territory
- French Guiana was a colony, discovered in the 1500s by a group of French colonist that settled there.
- French Guiana is the smallest of the three Guianas, nevertheless it is the largest French territory.
- The official name of this French territory is “Guiana”: The adjective “French” used in the common name corresponds only to a linguistic accommodation from the colonial period, when there were three Guianas: British Guiana (Now Guyana), Dutch Guiana (now Suriname) and French Guiana.
- It is also the only region of South America where the official language is not Spanish or Portuguese but French
- The Capital is Cayenne

3.2. History and Population

The conquest and the exploitation of the region that constitutes French Guiana is part of the world movement affected by the European expansion. European nations engage for the share of the America by competition without excluding alliances or conflicts.

French people conquered French Guiana during the 17th century. Their objectives were politic, economic and religious. The colonialism was about affirming the power of the French monarchy, contributing to its enrichment and showing France's ability to expand the limits of Christianity. This will for power come in conflict with others Europeans States, especially Spain, Portugal, England, and United Provinces.

It took more than three quarters of a century (1604-1676) for French colonist affirm their presence in French Guiana.

Today, French Guiana is a country with a rich afro-Caribbean culture due to the existing ethnic mix since the colonization area until now and it represents a crossroad of different populations and consequently different musical traditions.

First of all, we have music of the first inhabitants of French Guiana, before the arrival of the colonists: Amerindian and Bushi-Nengué music. Amerindians or Indians from America were considered to amount to around 30 000 before colonialism, but because of different invasions, sickness and slavery they are currently only 10000 and represent only 6% of the population. Bushi-Nengués are descendants of Surinamese slaves, they resisted the slavery, fled the plantations and took refuge to the forest and kept the living and musical traditions of their ancestors. Now, they live next to the river "Le Marony" natural border of French Guiana and Suriname.

During the colonization, creole music appeared with African slaves, under the influence of «Colonist » music in the XVII century. Creole people are the result of interbreeding between old Africans slaves and old European colonist. They represent 60% of the population today.

Laotian, Colombian, Chinese, Cuban and Haitian music came with the organized immigration to build French Guiana, especially the spatial base to launch the rockets at the beginning of the XX century. This country is also a border with Brazil and Surinam (Dutch Guiana), countries that also have a musical influence on French Guiana.

Nowadays, all these musics are really present in French Guiana but Amerindian music, Bushi-Nengué music and Creole music are the traditional Guianese music. Nevertheless, Creole music represent most the traditional Guianese music because Creole people are the majority of the population in French Guiana, and Amerindians and Bushi-Nengues live in communities far away of the capital.

4. CREOLE MUSIC IN FRENCH GUIANA

4.1. Definition and evolution of the word “Creole”

- The term “creole” has two etymologies, Portuguese (crioulo) and Spanish (criollo) which derived from the Latin word “criare”, which means “ feed, raise’ or more precisely “ fed servant in the house”.
- Initially, a person “creole” was someone who was “raised on the spot” that’s to say, “who is from the country”, as opposite to “a foreigner to the local culture”.
- This word was used to designate, above all, the white child born and raised in the European colonies such as: Martinique, Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Reunion, Louisiana, etc.

- Thereafter, this term will designate the black population, the “Creole of color” and therefore, the language of that population, creole.
- The word creole has been used in the sense in Louisiana for a long time, where it still is, designating “white creoles”, generally, members of wealthy families owning plantations.
- Today, the creole noun is used with various meaning, to describe people, but especially applies to mixed languages and cultures resulting.

4.2 . Creole music

Creole music comes from two continents:

- In Europe with the court dances (the minuet, the current) and popular dances (the motion, the round)
- In Africa with the dances accompanied by percussions

The characteristics which form the basis of creole musical culture is that the music concept intimately connects music and dance. Two major categories result: the first one called “musical”, based on the Western orchestra; and the other one called “local”, currently referred as folklore, based undeniably on African rhythmic drums. Both of these categories are used in a purely creole syncretic style inspired by African and European dances because they were born in a context of the slavery.

4.3. Creole Rhythms

- The main ones are:
 - 1) **Kaséko**: this creole word is a contraction of a French expression “casser le corps” which means, “The body is breaking”.
This is the name given to the most Guianese popular rhythm, percussion.
The dance that accompanies them is a dance of seduction, became a symbol of fun, romp with resistance.

- 2) **Lérol:** This is the rhythm that symbolizes the cultural diversity of French Guiana. Derived from the French words “les rôles” which means “the roles”, which are not other than the figures of the quadrille dances, originally from England that appeared in the XVI century known as the “square dance” in which the dancers are positioned on two lines. It has similarities with others Caribbean rhythms: the “Léro” of Puerto Rico, the “Léro” of Saint-domingue, the “Léwa” of Haiti and the “Léwoz” of Guadeloupe.
- 3) **Grajévals and Grajé:** Composed by the word “Grajé” and “vals” from the French word “valse”. The “Grajé” is another Guianese rhythm, however, despite appearances, these two rhythms are really different. Grajévals is more linked to the waltz from Europe. Both of them are a dance performed on a three pieced rhythm, with focuses on circular movement. The Grajévals is a graceful and elegant dance, performed with solemnity.
- 4) **Débot:** Rhythm and dance intimately linked to the history of gold mining and Saint-Lucians in French Guiana. In French Guiana it also called “Dé bo” from the French words “deux bords” which signifies “both side” because this rhythm favors alternating of open step on one and the other side. Gestures accompanying the dances are alternately on each side outward.
- 5) **Béliya:** The name Béliya occurs both in French Guiana and Martinique. It refers in both countries, to a rhythm played with the traditional percussions and the creole traditional dance that accompanies it. The existence of the Béliya is mixed with the history of French Guiana and

consequently, the slave trade and which has its roots in Africa.

5. MY PASSION: GOSPEL MUSIC IN UNITED STATES

5.1. Definition of Gospel:

- “Gospel” is an inspiration religious Christian song
- The term “gospel” is the contraction of “god” and “spell” which signifies “word of god”. The term “gospel song” appeared only in the 30s
- “Gospel” style appeared in the early twentieth century, between 1925 and 1985.
- These songs were inspired by the Bible (mainly the New Testament) and related to the daily life. Thomas A. Dorsey was the first who composed news songs and call them “Gospel”. He is considered as being the father of Gospel Music.
- Gospel is musically based on jazz and blues, which allows the artists to keep going to take their inspiration from actual music such as soul music, rap or R’n’B

5.2. Context

- The history of this Afro-American music is linked to a terrible reality: slavery, and the triangular trade in the late 1700s.
- This is in this context, the first form of this song was born: The Negro Spiritual

5.3. “Negro Spiritual” and “Gospel song”: common misunderstandings.

The distinction between “Negro Spiritual” and “Gospel song” correspond to different historical situations.

5.3.1. Negro Spiritual

- First of all, negro spiritual was born during work execution in the cotton fields, where African slaves performed songs composed spontaneously in a call and answer format
- The structure is:
 - 1) The soloist sang a song that was repeated in choir by other slaves
 - 2) Answers could be shout, repetition of words or onomatopoeia
 - 3) Instruments were almost non-existent, except some rustic percussion or simple hand clapping
- Lyrics were really inspired by the Old Testament in the bible: the little David, Joshua in Jericho, Ezekiel's chariot...
- These songs could be coded messages only understandable by slaves.

5.3.2. Gospel song

- Since jazz influenced and transformed spiritual songs in the 1920s, it found an urban extension in the "Gospel song", which derives its existence from the spontaneous assemblies and is accompanied by instruments and also clapping hands and stomping feet on the ground.
- "Gospel song" is a religious song that originates in Bible verses, performed in the Afro-American tradition. "Gospel song" differs from the negro-spiritual by exclusive reference to the New Testament and its show-influenced nature; aspect borrowed from the musical and theatre world.
- It doesn't stay in the church. Through recordings, and then in concerts, it became known to a much wider audience than the black congregations where it was born.

6. GOSPEL MUSIC/CREOLE MUSIC: SIMILARITIES, DIFFERENCES AND CONNECTION

6.1. Similarities:

- They both are a specific genre of black (Afro-American) music in their own country
- They both were born and developed during the slavery
- They both were an outlet, used as an escape from the very difficult life of the slaves.
- They both keep the memory of their own history, and keep it alive, and they are considered as heritage, as a part of an identity of the black community.

6.2. Differences:

- They don't talk about the same story: Gospel is about the words of the bible, of the coming of Jesus Christ, and creole music in French Guiana talks about daily life such as: love, pain, happiness or, eventually, sex.
- Gospel as music hasn't stopped interacting with other profane music forms, vocals styles and instruments up until today, but creole music keeps its own traditions, playing with a same percussion section and maintaining the same rhythmical forms. Nonetheless, Creole music has been commercialized too; adding piano and guitar, but the rhythmical form is still recognizable.

6.3. Connection, how to put them together:

We can see that this two music styles share the same historical context, and can be represented by the percussion. Even if Gospel music uses drum sets and current instruments, it relates to this aspect through the essence of Gospel music and its first form (Negro spiritual), where percussion was used to communicate in the fields until that was forbidden by their masters.

Lyricaly, a connection can also be made. Creole music talks about every subject of life while Gospel music, known as a religious music and which means “good news”, are encouraging songs, something to keep the listener alive, connected and engaged to survive. Even through most of the lyrics are about bible history, for the listeners that referred to their own life.

The goals of gospel music have changed with the years. First of all, its aim was to encourage and give hope to the black people during the segregation, and that’s why today it is used and related to daily life; not as much as creole song but its paths join at some point.

7. BERKLEE VALENCIA

At Berklee Valencia, I have discovered essentially jazz, under the influence of various cultures according to the origin of the student, through the jazz ensemble, and with my private vocal lesson. I’ve learned how to sing jazz and Brazilian music.

As a matter of fact, the majority of Berklee students have more or less a thorough knowledge of classic and jazz music. Nevertheless, coming from all over the world and belonging to different cultures, their countries’ music permits them to give another character to their own music and give it a well-defined identity.

I have had a certain approach to Latin music such as flamenco, salsa, and tango with Hispanic students during gigs or performance forum class. Through diverse experiences, I learned how to coordinate my skills and their knowledge in rehearsals, in performances, and in studio projects.

It has allowed me to know how to manage and use materials and programs in the studio and how to adapt myself musically and to feel comfortable with several different styles and musical backgrounds

8. MY PROJECT

For my culminating experience, I chose to create a gospel ensemble, because gospel is a music that I'm passionate about and I consider it the main musical style that defines me. This also opens a new opportunity to Berklee Valencia, giving students the possibility to practice a new musical style which had not been present in the College.

It also allowed me to develop my skills to lead an ensemble and learn how to play other styles that my fellow students are not used to playing. Within this ensemble, we have had all types of gospel music: traditional, modern, and contemporary. For that, I have prepared a repertoire, established an agenda, booked days and hours of rehearsal, sent invitations by mail to all participants and verbally communicated with fellow ensemble members, booked the rehearsal room, made the equipment choice (music stand, microphone...), set up and prepared my personal aims for the interpretation, that's to say, knowing the structure, the arrangement, the melody, the harmony, and the lyric intent for the ensemble as a vocalist.

On the other hand, I have recorded gospel music combined with several types of music that I can find in Berklee such as electronic music, jazz, and even with specific instruments from other countries. Learning about the musical world for me is a chance to develop my performance and written-composer skills, in order to adapt as a singer to all types of music, and to find a musical identity in gospel music

9. REPERTOIRE EXPLANATION

9.1. Song 1: “Jesus will” by Anita Wilson

- The first song is a cover of a gospel song with neo soul music influences. I created a Gospel ensemble during the first semester at Berklee and I wanted to record a song that we had been practicing to be a part of my culminating experience.
- In that song **the goals** were to do a new vocal background arrangement in order to give the song a new dynamism, and give it my own artistic touch.
- I also wanted to show an example of a current gospel song, that way, it allows the listener to have an idea of what can be done nowadays musically, and I can better illustrate the other two songs I have selected to record.
- **Harmony:** I chose the use of an extended harmony, that's to say, use scale based on 7th and 9th chords in place of ordinary triads. The rest of the chords are based on the originals.
Example: Fm9 – Bb7 – Eb7 -
- **Rhythmically:** Instead of a neo soul bounce (which is more laid back, more relaxed) I choose more a funky rhythm for the band.
The most important rhythmic part is on bar 9 or 25 in the charts for the band, they all have to play this melodic and rhythmical section together.
- **Melodically:** I sing the same melody of the song for the cover.

J. 88

JESUS WILL

FRITA GILSON

TRANSCRIBED BY ALEX WILLIAMS

INTRO

E \flat 7 E \flat 7 D \flat 7 D \flat 7 C \flat

5 **(A)** VERSE F \natural 7 B \flat 7 E \flat MAJ7 D \flat 7 C \flat

9 A \flat MAJ7/B \flat E \flat MAJ7 D \flat 7 C \flat 4X

13 **(B)** D \natural 7 G \flat 7(9) C \natural 7

17 D \natural 7 G \flat 7(9) C \natural 7

21 A \flat 7 A \flat 7 E \flat /B \flat D \flat /A D \flat /A \flat C/G

25 F \natural 7 A \flat MAJ7/B \flat E \flat MAJ7 D \flat 7 C \flat

29 $\overbrace{3.}$ E \flat MAJ7 G \flat 7 A \flat 7 A \flat 7 B \flat 7(9)

9.2. Song 2: “Tiens Bon” by Christophe Bazabas

- This is an original song composed by my cousin Christophe Bazabas from Martinique. This is an Afro-Caribbean gospel song with French lyrics. It's called "Tiens bon" which means "Hold on". This is an encouraging song basically.
- In this song I wanted to show the connection that I've been talking previously through the percussion. I wanted to show this historical context shared by creole music and gospel music and at the same time that I'm always in an exploration stage with all the approaches that I can receive from the Berklee students coming from all over the world.
- This song allows me to create a new arrangement for backing vocal which is also for me show the Gospel influence
- **Harmony:** The harmony is based on:

I – IV – VI – IV

These degrees are considered like the spine of the song; this chord progression appears obviously and represents the song harmonically. This is a personal choice of the composer.

- **Rhythmically:** This is a creole ballad (inspired by Mario Canonge). To this, I added an improvised rhythm with a percussion from Greece called “Darbuka” to give another flavour to the song, and enrich my musical experience.
- **Melodically:** I didn't make any changes to the melody, leaving it just as the composer created it.

MON MORCEAU 23

BAZEM'S CARSTONE

(A)

1 D^(sus2) G B_m⁷ G

5 D^(sus2) G^(maj7) B_m⁷ G

9 C F_{4m}⁷ G C⁷

13 E_m⁷ F_{4m}⁷ G C¹³

17 D G^(sus2) B_m^(sus2) A_m⁷ D^(sus4) G^(maj7)

(A2)

21 D^(sus2) G B_m⁷ G

25 D^(sus2) G^(maj7) B_m⁷ A_m⁷ G^(maj7)

29 E_m⁷ F_{4m}⁷ D^{(sus2)/G} A^(sus4)

33 E_m⁷ F_{4m}⁷ G E_m⁷/B_b

9.3. Song 3: “Pa lagué mo” by Lyncia Pivert

- The third gospel song is a composition of mine, “Pa lagué mo” which means, “Don’t leave me”.
- **The process:** First of all, I found the melody and wrote the lyrics in Guianese Creole. Based on my melody, the jazz pianist Ricardo Curto, transcribed the chords.
- At the beginning, I didn’t have the intention to add a backing vocal arrangement; I really wanted it to sound like a ballad jazz piece and have it shorter, but I took in consideration advices from production class’s teacher who wanted to hear “pa lagué mo” again and helped me find a musical extension to do it.
- My purpose was to make a Creole Gospel with jazz influences. Adding a Cajon, another kind of Spanish percussion, it took another step in the experimental expectation that I have, while also helping make the connection that I mentioned previously, historical and lyrically, with my musical background.
- **Harmony:** I created a special harmonisation for the backing vocals in the words “Pa lagué mo”, in order to strengthen the middle of the song.
- **Rhythmically:** that’s a $\frac{3}{4}$, a back beat, with a little influence of a rhythm from Spain called “Fandangos de Huelva”.

10. CONCLUSION:

What did I learn during this journey?

First of all, I've learned how to assert myself as an artist, which means using all of the musical resources that I had, and that I've been working on during so many years. I've learned to give a chance to my creativity in making my own process; to know how I can make a connection between the music that I like the most, but also take in consideration history, tradition, beliefs, and lyrics of those musics that are my tradition. I have learned to take the most of it to show through my music what really represents me as an artist.

Second of all, I've learned to be open and flexible to other styles of music. Incorporate others instruments, others rhythms, other musical styles and others languages, which for me, was really interesting and enriching for my musical knowledge and myself.

Coordinating, organizing, communicating, being a complement in a team, accepting feedback and criticism to grow and work better was also a good thing to learn during this journey.

And last but not least, I've learned how to improve my skill as a performer on stage and in the studio. To know how to manipulate Pro tools and other programs, know which microphone is better to sound good was really helpful and allowed me to be more independent.

Did that change something in me as an artist?

Yes it definitely did! Now I know more about me as a singer because I've been able to create my own music with my own requirements, but I've also been able to be open and sing other music styles understand their approach, their reference, their specific technics vocally speaking and I feel

that all of those experiences made me grow as an artist and also as a person. It's really difficult as a human being to accept changes and I felt that making this step during this year has been something special and new and it has changed a lot in me in all aspects.

Do I have new perspective for the future?

Before I got here, the next step for me was to sing backing vocals for several gospel singers in United States. But now with all the opportunities that I've got through performance on stage, in the studio, and also with the classes that I've been taking (Production class or Economy), I still want to further develop my professional experience in staying open about my future and keep exploring music in all its aspects.

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