



Frida Lvnøstad

"I'm a pedantic and honest person. I have X-ray eyes and I see everything. It sometimes drives me crazy. "

It's been over 30 years since the break up of ABBA, but Annifrid Lyngstad - better known as Frida - never left the world of music. Earlier this year she came out with the single, "1865" which pays homage to the brave men who ascended the Matterhorn 150 years ago. As a longtime resident of Zermatt, Frida recorded the song with her old friend Urs Biner; author of the popular Wolli books where one character is inspired by the Swedish superstar who, in return, always writes the foreword of his books.

By Camilla Alfthan

Your latest single is about the 150th anniversary of the ascent of the Matterhorn. Do you climb yourself? When I was younger I climbed a great deal. Now I ski a lot, sometimes off piste and heli skiing. I did the Haute Route from Verbier to Zermatt. It takes a great deal of physical effort - you carry your skis on your back and walk with leather underneath them as you're going up. Once you've reached the top you ski down the most incredible, untouched snow - then you're happy. After that, there's other mountains to climb - it is rather like life with sadness and disappointments in between moments of happiness and joy.

How did you end up in Zermatt? I moved here after I lost my husband 16 years ago. We already had some property and I sold our house in Friburg where we'd lived during many years. I've here now been for 15 years and in Switzerland for over 31 years. I'm very comfortable in the midst of nature surrounded by the mountains.

Do you sing in the mountains? No, I don't. You really must be focused at what you're doing and where you put your feet so you don't fall down. Mountain climbing always fascinated me - people who affront challenges where it's just themselves and nature and you're not quite sure of what could happen. If it is fortunate or if something could go wrong. There's risks with the crevasses of the glaciers and loose rocks but

they do it anyway. As creative people we always need new challenges and to have new goals.

You used to sail - was that also a risky sport? Not at all. (Laughs.) I sailed with Benny (Andersson) and the most dramatic event was when we'd anchored in a fishing net on the western coast of Sweden. We started drifting and couldn't sleep all night. The next morning we had to get help from the coast guards to get loose. They had to take the boat up on land to untangle us.

What are you doing now? I've designed a skiing overall which J. Lindeberg is producing and I'm very happy with it. I'm writing about my life. It could be a book, a musical or a film; I don't know yet - I've written a lot in my life but never a book. It takes patience and discipline which is not always easy to maintain. My boyfriend pushes me - he thinks it's a great idea and for me it's important to have a goal to work towards.

Music always played a major role in your life.. Music has ruled my life. When you come from a modest background you use your talent to move on. You challenge yourself and you ascend certain mountains. Music has been in my life for over sixty years. It's been with me on the path to happiness and it's helped me through sorrows. It is interesting how music affects people, how it can help in many situations. Personally, I like all sorts of music. Opera, classic, pop, jazz, hiphop.. And sometimes just silence.

Do you miss the days with ABBA? No, I don't miss ABBA. It's been forty years since we started and it was a different time. I don't miss working as intensely as we did then. As you get older you want to take it easy. I don't perform and I don't want to stand in the limelight. We were young and had a drive - it would never work now. As Björn says, 'who wants to look at a bunch of old people?' It's better that you remember us from our youth. Besides, we all do different things now. Just because you've performed it doesn't mean that you'll be doing it for the rest of your life.

Now you're in a museum in Sweden, how does that feel? Björn took responsibility for the creation of the ABBA Museum at Djurgården in Stockholm. He wanted to make sure that it would be exactly the way we want it instead of leaving it to someone else and then not be happy with the result. Thanks to his initiative it turned out great.

Which of your own traits do you like the best? That I'm a pedantic and honest person. However, sometimes I like my pedantic side the least. I have X-ray eyes and I see everything. It sometimes drives me crazy.

If you could change something what would that be? I guess nothing. I like myself the way I am. It's the contradictions which makes you the person you are.

If you hadn't been a singer what would you have done instead? At school I got my best marks for gymnastics, drawing and music. If I hadn't chosen music I would've become something within design - fashion or interior design which also interests me.

Who do you admire? Children who despite a difficult childhood use their inner strength and drive to create a good life for themselves. I work with charities for children as it's extremely important that we adults are there for them. They need mentors and idols for their continuous growth.

You were brought up by your grandmother? Yes, recently, when they commemorated the Holocaust victims I was thinking about that and where I come from. I wasn't Lebensborn as people often write - I was born in November 1945 when the war had just ended. My father was a German officer in Norway when he met my mother. My grandmother took my out of there when my mother passed away. I'm the result of a love affair. It wasn't popular in Norway to be seen with the Germans but I can understand their relation. You always seek love.

What do you find is the worst tendency in the world that we live in today? It's terrible with the terrorism all over the world which creates fear and hatred. I cannot tolerate that you treat anyone differently just because of their religion and I cherish everyone who stands up for diversity and different thinking.

Do you have a motto? To live in respect and peace with everyone despite their religion, sexuality or race.

What is the best thing anyone ever said to you? 'I love you'. It could be anyone - an adult, a child or a fan.

When do you feel the most sexy? That's a funny question to someone who is almost 70 (laughs). I think I look good - I'm happy with myself. The sexiest thing is when a person feels good about herself.