



### **Monique – chancing on chanson**

Music truly is an international language. Visit any country and more often than not you will find it offering its own take on jazz, blues, rock, folk and world. But there's one music genre that only one nation does well – and that's the nation that founded it.

Chanson may literally translate as 'song' in French but there's far more to this quintessentially Gallic entertainment: a sophisticated and stylish blend of song and cabaret, transcending humour and tragedy with dramatic punch.

Think Aznavour, Piaf: if ever there was a music that brought to life the essence of a nation, it's chanson. It's sexy, funny, mischievous, knowing: and those are all characteristics that sum up one of the genre's finest current day songwriters and interpreters.

Born and brought up in the South of France, Monique Petignier studied singing, accordion and piano at the Conservatoire in Nimes. After completing her studies she travelled extensively throughout Europe and Africa before settling in London.

Monique (she only uses her first name professionally) is now firmly established on the UK music scene, performing regularly in theatres, festivals, concert halls and specialist cabaret venues.

She has been a champion of the music of Corsica and of performers from French Canada and her shows blend world music with jazz and humour to powerful effect.

Monique's first album 'On the Boulevard des Hommes' was released in 2004 and she follows it up in January with the release of 'Paris Lite'.

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'I wanted to reflect the fun side of French chanson, and to do it in English for a British audience,' she says. She has recorded ten of her own songs on this occasion: 'a couple of them are a bit serious but I hope songs like 'He made Paris move for me' and 'Pissed on Pastis' will bring a smile' – there's also a couple of songs by Charles Trenet, a translation of a Gréco hit – 'very sweet!' - and a Corsican hit called 'Companero'.

Spanning world music, French chanson, jazz, cabaret and comedy, Monique's shows are performed regularly in Britain. This October (2006) finds her touring with her new band in a celebration of Mediterranean culture and music.

'It's a show especially for the British,' she tells us. 'If you like the music of Pink Martini from the States, Paris Combo from France, I Muvrini from Corsica, Paolo Conte from Italy and Souad Massi from Algeria, or the comedy songs of Victoria Wood, Flanders & Swann, Dillie Keane and Kit & the Widow, then this show is for you!'

Sung in English, Corsican, French and Arabic, Monique's set is sophisticated, funny, original and versatile.

She sings classic French chanson like Boum from Charles Trenet but in a reggae arrangement. She enjoys exposing the North African and wider Mediterranean influences (Monique is the only singer currently promoting Corsican music in Britain).

She blends jazz-influenced comic songs on life, sex and food in France with some of her darker songs of love and Mediterranean betrayal, such as 'In the African Sun', which she sings in English and Arabic.

If Brits love Monique, she loves us too. Married to pianist Nigel, she lives in Wimbledon and has been resident in Britain for many years. What is it about chanson that appeals this side of the Channel?

"I think the answer lies in the fact we have been neighbours and rivals for so long, firstly, and also that the British have embraced other cultures, especially food and music, increasingly over the past two decades," she says. "Cheaper and easier access to air travel has seen more British people discover and enjoy what other countries have to offer beyond the sun and sand and British people are curious to understand more about what underpins other cultures. They also like to poke fun out of the French, so I do it for them."

For entertainment of style and versatility, Monique is a chanteuse to take a chance on.

[www.monique.co.uk](http://www.monique.co.uk)

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**MONIQUE PLAYS LIVE -**

Monique and her band play the following dates in October/November:

**OCTOBER**

21st, Riverhouse Theatre, \Manor Road, Walton on Thames, Surrey

[www.riverhousebarn.co.uk](http://www.riverhousebarn.co.uk)

Box office: 01932 253354; show starts at 8.00 pm; there is a bar; venue will be arranged cabaret style with tables and chairs; ticket price £11.00 and £9.00 concessions.

26th Regent Centre, High Street, Christchurch, Hampshire

[www.regentcentre.co.uk](http://www.regentcentre.co.uk)

Box office: 01202 499148; show starts 7.30pm; ticket price £10.00 and £9.00 concessions.

27th Theatre Royal, Addington Street, Margate, Kent - Canterbury International Festival

[www.theatroyalmargate.co.uk](http://www.theatroyalmargate.co.uk)

Box office: 01843 293877; show starts at 8.00pm; ticket price £12.00 or £11.00 advance booking.

**NOVEMBER**

11th Bollington Arts Centre, Wellington Road, Bollington, nr Macclesfield, Cheshire

[www.bollingtonartscentre.org.uk](http://www.bollingtonartscentre.org.uk)

Box office: 01625 574410; show starts at 8.00pm; ticket price £8.00; venue arranged cabaret style.

For news of further dates, visit [www.monique.co.uk](http://www.monique.co.uk)

**'Paris Lite' is released by Irregular Records in January through Proper Distribution.**

ENDS

**Information released on behalf of Irregular Records by Singsong Entertainment Publicity**

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