



Frida: A graceful, poised, spiritually centered, reflective woman

Our American correspondent, Robin Chism, was granted an interview with Frida at the Mamma Mia! after party following the Las Vegas premiere. As you can imagine, Robin was excited about interviewing his pop icon and music idol. In his own words, "I was not prepared to meet a woman of such extreme substance, or that the interview would become so personal for me. After much reflection, I decided I could not edit the interview because to do so would alter the full embodiment of who Frida is as a person." The interview lasted 30 minutes and, at his request following the interview, Frida agreed to meet Dora O'Rourke and Ursula Esser, posing for photos giving autographs for all three.

Robin Chism. Are you excited about being in Las Vegas?

Frida Lyngstad. I find the city of Las Vegas to be a bit strange. ABBA performed here at the Aladdin Theatre in 1979 and yesterday we toured the city and I was amazed how much the city had changed.

RC. When you were recording with ABBA in the 70s did you ever think that ABBA music would evolve to the stage?

FL. No. We were a recording group. Although when we did The Girl with the Golden Hair those songs seemed to translate well for the stage. It was years later before Benny and Björn started on stage works. I don't believe any of us would have predicted the success of Mamma Mia! I must also say that to sit here this evening and listen to other people perform our songs sometimes made me feel emotional because I find myself thinking back to the time when I was performing those songs and, perhaps, what was going on in my life at that time.

RC. You have stated that you felt that ABBA would never reunite, but you would not shut the door on some of its members working on some other musical collaboration. Is that still possible?

FL. First I must say "never say never" to anything because I have proved myself wrong in the past. [laughs] I myself would not be opposed to a reunion, which I have also stated in the past. That decision is not left up to me, so a reunion would most likely not happen. I also feel that we are all older now, perhaps too old to do pop.

RC. Did you know that Fleetwood Mac has their first new studio album in 15 years coming out in the spring?

FL. Really? [pauses] That's interesting.

RC. How do you feel about ABBA's success in the United States?

FL. I would not know about that. Could you tell me about it?

RC. ABBA Gold has sold six million copies. There have been several television programs featuring ABBA, like ABBA Fan Club, and Dancing Queen was voted number one on a program on VH-1 entitled Guilty Pleasures. It just seems very cool and hip now to be a fan of ABBA. Because of the success of Mamma Mia! there is more awareness about your music and there are two touring groups in this country promoting your music.

FL. It is amazing how our music has stayed popular.

RC. I had a friend over the other night who found out I was a big ABBA fan, so she wanted to watch some of the videos. She kept reflecting on her difficult childhood and told me how she would go into her room and play ABBA music to escape. It would make her feel better because it made her happy.

FL. I cannot tell you how many letters I get from fans who tell me how our music helped them through difficult times in their childhood, or adulthood for that matter. I am grateful to have been a part of anyone's healing process or to at least represent a part of this.

RC. Your Djupa Andetag CD did that for me, in addition to being pure magic.

FL. Really? Why?

RC. Aside from the incredible songs and your beautiful vocals, it was a healing record for me. [I hesitate.]

FL. Go on! [Sits back in her chair.]

RC. My father passed way in March of that year, so his death was still new to me. I found Djupa Andetag very helpful in lifting me from my depression through the music and its words.

FL. First, I feel I received so much criticism from the press on that album for being a middle age woman singing pop songs. But that CD was important for me also because I had learned of my husband's illness and I believe I tried to convey spirituality and love on that CD. As I look back, I was dealing with my feelings also. I am glad that it helped you in that way.

RC. Thank you. That leads me to my next question. Some fans believe Djupa Andetag is one of the better solo works of an ABBA member. Is a future album on the horizon?

FL. No. An album represents too much work for me right now. There is also promotion that accompanies an album launch. My life is so different now. I would much rather be an invited guest on someone else's album. This would allow me to continue to sing while concentrating on redirecting my energies.

RC. How was it to work with Filippa Giordano and record La Barcarolle?

FL. She is a wonderful woman and beautiful singer with a lovely voice.

RC. You are such a good example
causes.

of someone using their celebrity status to help society through
Is there anything your loyal fans could do to help your causes?

FL. [Thinks for a moment.] Yes. What I have to say is very important to me. I sometimes go onto the ABBA website and become very disturbed by the amount of arguing and fighting about Agnetha and I. Things written like "Frida is better than Agnetha" or "Agnetha is better than Frida." Or "Frida's voice is better than Agnetha's" or "Agnetha's voice is better than Frida's." Agnetha and I do not fight, so why do ABBA fans fight about this? I would like to see this negative energy channeled into a loving, peaceful, caring direction for each other and for the environment. The healing that so many ABBA fans say we provide them could be used as a base to promote peace and serenity for everyone.

RC. Thank you Frida for the interview. It has been an honor and the high point of my life to meet you. Thank you for making my life richer through your music and your voice.

FL. Robin, I must ask, how long have you been an ABBA fan?

RC. Since I was fourteen. I remember riding out to the record store on my bicycle to buy my first album, which was Arrival. [Perfect time, as I pulled out the Arrival album for a quick signature.]

FL. [She laughs.] It certainly looks like you got much use out of it, based on the cover! [Laughs again.]

-Robin Chism

