

Intro

[00:00:00] **Chrissy:** Hi there. This is Chrissy Fowler welcoming you to the Flying Shoes Radio Hour podcast, which is produced by Belfast Flying Shoes and the Country Dance and Song Society. In cooperation with WBFY Belfast Maine's Community Radio Station, where the show airs weekly, mostly using music from the station's digital library.

[00:00:31] This podcast version of the show features contra dance music, and conversations with musicians whose talents catalyze joy and connection wherever they play, including here in Maine where this program was recorded. Enjoy this episode and thanks for listening.

Episode Intro

This fourth episode of the Flying Shoes Radio Hour podcast involves chatting (and laughing) with the Quebecois band, Genticorum. Original members, Pascal Gemme and Yann Falquet, along with their "Genticorum 2.0" bandmate Nicholas Williams were in midcoast Maine for several days, and we recorded the show as soon as they arrived in town. The podcast launched a weekend full of Genticorum delights: a contra dance, a musicians' workshop, a singing workshop, and two concerts - ooh la la! Is what I say.

Yann, Nicholas & Pascal are a treat to spend time with, and their music is absolutely uplifting and enlivening — even when it's a little dark and modal, and especially when it's got that distinctive Quebecois joie de vivre. Our conversation was a window into the band's history and evolution, their individual paths to playing trad music, and specifically how playing for contra dances helped to cement their status as a trio. We also heard musings on trad music in general, and what they consider differently when they're working with a contra caller as opposed to doing arrangements for concert. Plus you'll hear the story of how the particular compensation that Pascal's one of his earlier band's got for a gig led directly to Pascal & Yann's first musical connection.

I think we could have talked for much longer, but this podcast might whet your appetite for more connections with Genticorum - Nicholas Williams, Pascal Gemm & Yann Falquet.

[00:00:55] **Music:**

[00:00:56] **Chrissy:** Welcome to the Flying Shoes Radio Hour, a program that highlights [00:01:00] the roots and branches of the contra dance music that we love, here in Belfast, Maine, and beyond, the musicians who play that music with and for others, and of course, the dancers of all ages that it inspires.

Speaking of, I am here with Genticorum, and we are psyched to put on this show. Oh, it is so nice to be here with all three of you.

[00:03:23] **Chrissy:** Here you are in Maine,

[00:03:25] **Yann:** So good to be here.

[00:03:27] **Chrissy:** You sir? Yeah, here in Belfast. And in fact, so lovely that you started with that tune because that was a tune that way back in 2018, the last time you played for the Belfast Flying Shoes dance, you did a little workshop beforehand.

[00:03:40] And um, that was one of the tunes that came to the all comers band. And it has come up since.

[00:03:46] **Music:** Yeah.

[00:03:46] **Chrissy:** Band has played it since then. And, um, in the intervening years, uh,

[00:03:51] **Pascal:** How do you play it? Do you play it twice as long on the A part? Do you cut like a repetition of the A part? You know,

[00:03:58] **Chrissy:** I have no idea. They make it fit.

[00:03:59] **Pascal:** They make [00:04:00] it. They do. Yes, yes, yes.

[00:04:04] **Chrissy:** It's good for one that's not sticking on the phrase

[00:04:07] **Yann:** Right, but it's, it's so, uh, glorious. So that comes in a dance. It just wakes everything, everybody up and it is so fantastic.

[00:04:13] **Nicholas:** Nothing else exists. You're just in a state of pure bliss. Who cares if you're dancing the right steps.

[00:04:19] Exactly.

[00:04:20] **Speaker 3:** Elation.

[00:04:21] **Chrissy:** All right, well, let's take a step back. Speaking of steps, I launched right in... Here I am with Genticorum, as I said, and, uh, maybe you guys could just introduce yourselves and let us know where you live at the moment, and then we'll talk a little bit more about you guys as a band. And individuals.

[00:04:37] **Yann:** Sure. Well, uh, my name is Yann Falquet. I'm from Quebec, originally lived in, uh, Montreal. Grew up a little north of Montreal. Lived in Montreal for about 20 years. Uh, and, but now I moved to Vermont. So I live in Brattleboro, Vermont, which is kind of rich, uh, terroir for dance musician and really close to the, you know, dance [00:05:00] epicenter of Greenfield, Massachusetts.

[00:05:01] So pretty nice place to be.

[00:05:03] **Nicholas:** I'm Nicholas Williams. I'm originally from Ottawa, Ontario, and, um, now live in Waterville, Quebec, the small town. It's another, it's a small epicenter, I think we can call it. I think Pascal, and I'm combined with a, with a total population of about 900 in the village. We can, if there's two trad musicians, we can call it a small epicenter, I think.

[00:05:26] Um, anyways, uh, yeah, so I, I, I live in Waterville and play, play music there, um, um, here playing some accordion and flute and sometimes I play piano for dances with a band.

[00:05:39] **Pascal:** And I'm Pascal Gemme.

[00:05:40] I grew up in Farham, Quebec, uh, and now I live in Waterville, Quebec, the same epicenter that Nicholas was talking about.

[00:05:52] And, uh, I grew up listening to that music. I didn't know it was linked to any kind of dances, and I [00:06:00] kind of found that out over there years. So I played the fiddle and uh, do foot tapping and I play a little bit of mandolin.

[00:06:08] **Chrissy:** I saw the mandolin earlier when you first, everybody was unpacking and I said, whoa, Pascal, the mandolin.

[00:06:14] Uhhuh,

[00:06:14] **Pascal:** yeah.

[00:06:15] **Chrissy:** It was exciting news. So you grew up listening to the music, but you didn't actually know that there were connections with dancing or, no,

[00:06:21] **Pascal:** My grandfather played. Fiddle and he sang, but he mostly played fiddle many times a day. He would practice during lunchtime and uh, in the evening. Yeah, so I, I was exposed to the music.

[00:06:35] I, I liked it. Some of it I liked more, like the Irish and Scottish stuff that he was playing and the, the music that sounds more like what we played at the overture. Uhhuh, that I didn't really like that

[00:06:49] **Music:** Uhhuh.

[00:06:50] **Pascal:** It was too like overly joyous for me for some reason, but it grew on me over the years.

[00:06:56] **Chrissy:** Overly joyous.

[00:06:57] Yeah. Yeah. Okay. That's good. I [00:07:00] can, nowadays, I want the overly joyous, right? Uh, yeah, yeah. Right. Yes. Uhhuh right at this life stage. Yeah. But maybe in your early youth you were like, no. Yeah,

[00:07:07] **Pascal:** No. Too much.

[00:07:09] **Chrissy:** Yeah,

[00:07:09] **Pascal:** Too, too strong emotions. It was more like the dark myth, mystical kind of weird sounding Irish tunes, model tunes.

[00:07:19] Yeah. That, that's what I like that, that's

[00:07:22] **Nicholas:** Amazing. You know, it's, it is great. I, I, I feel like, so I just went to see, this is gonna sound like a total random thing, but I, I went to see the new Superman movie with my kids the other day, and there's this great line because, you know, he's just such this clean straight guy who can't tell a lie.

[00:07:37] Just good kind of wholesome all American guy. And, and, and, and in this movie, Lois Lane talks about, you know, she's all into like punk music and her bad, and, and there's this one line that's like, you know, when she's giving him a hard time about being so straight laced, he's like, well, maybe that's the new punk, or maybe that's the new badass or something, you know, just being totally.

[00:07:57] Like straight up first [00:08:00] degree, you know, joyful. And so that's like, you know, I think, uh, these joyous quas, it's the new like badass kind of, uh, music out there. Just unashamedly.

[00:08:13] **Pascal:** Yeah. They, they appear more and more jam sessions in the last 10 years.

[00:08:16] **Music:** Mm-hmm.

[00:08:18] **Chrissy:** Definitely. So you had Roots Pascal with family.

[00:08:21] Mm-hmm. How about you Nicholas and Yann? What were your.

[00:08:24] **Nicholas:** My, uh, I, my, I, I have no links to traditional music in my family. I mean, my parents always, uh, loved having music around. My grandfather played the piano. He'd play like, uh, like ragtime piano and, and, uh, it's, it's interesting learning gradually more and more about that musical side.

[00:08:45] Like my grandparents, they would always have these music parties and people would just come over and sing and, uh, you know, things like, um, Farewell to Nova Scotia and like, uh, the Red River Valley, all these like classic old songs that again, we like [00:09:00] growing up we think of as being like, I don't know, summer camp songs are kind of hokey songs, but now I've come to really have an appreciation for that kind of repertoire that just brought tons of people together to, to sing.

[00:09:10] Um, so my household was, was very music supportive, but, uh, definitely no, no, uh, what you could say like tradition bearers, and.

[00:09:19] **Yann:** Yeah. Similar for me. No, no traditional music in my family, but big music listeners exposed me to concerts very, at an early age. We'd go out and see concerts was one of the thing we did with my family.

[00:09:31] Uh, and it's maybe in my late teens or you know, early adult life that some of my friends got into traditional music and I got hooked, uh, to it. And, and in fact, pretty early in my playing traditional music, I was exposed to dances because, uh, my first real ki band called the Singer was also a color. So we would do a show and often there was a dance part of it.

[00:09:55] So very early I realized that when you play that music, there's moments where you do arrangements for a [00:10:00] concert, but also there's moments where you just kinda let loose and play tunes. That was very early a

part of my connection with the music and, and a way to know the tune kind of more deeply, play them many, many times in a row.

[00:10:11] And so I like, I think these two aspects have been part of my. My musical life in the traditional music world.

[00:10:19] **Chrissy:** Yeah. Uh, so many questions have emerged from these brief little intro things. Um, what kind of concerts?

[00:10:27] **Yann:** Oh, well, you know, we were band, we were all in early twenties and, uh, playing concerts around, I guess it started in maybe in bars, uh, and then small concert series, maybe a couple of, uh, festivals that we play to

[00:10:40] **Music:** Uhhuh.

[00:10:40] **Yann:** Um, but, and I remember, you know, sometimes it's more like a party, like even for a private event where we'll play a concert and then after a dance set seems to be the natural, uh, thing we can go into.

[00:10:52] **Chrissy:** Yeah. Yep. And then did your family take you to trad music things or were you going to more popular,

[00:10:58] **Yann:** More like [00:11:00] Yeah, pop music, uh, old rock music, uh, Uhhuh, I went, my parents got me out of, uh, my, uh.

[00:11:07] School dormitory when I was, I think, 12 to go see Jethro Tall when they came through Montreal when I was 12. Uh, but also jazz and blues. Uh, just, there's a great festival as probably everybody knows in Montreal, 'cause the Montreal Jazz Festival. So that was a regular, uh, activity for us to go to the Montreal Jazz Festival.

[00:11:25] Yeah. Um, and we, but we did go to a, a local kind of square dance when I was a kid, but it was just music recorded on the radio. Like

[00:11:33] **Music:** a Yeah, from

[00:11:34] **Yann:** The, the, the Anglos in my town, it was mostly French speaking, but there was a a like a, like a little summer, you know, country club vibe thing where people would have a country, uh, a square dance.

[00:11:45] My parents loved it, so we'd go there and I, I had a good time. I had no idea what I was doing

[00:11:51] **Speaker 3:** as many people. Yeah, that's true for many people. Right,

[00:11:54] **Pascal:** right, right. Do you mean you didn't know, like it was linked to a tradition or what?

[00:11:59] **Yann:** The context of [00:12:00] Oh, exactly. I didn't know it was linked to a tradition. I think I knew it was like old timey uhuh dancing styles, but.

[00:12:06] But I think, yeah, I remember it was, you know, just trying to follow what people did around the Yeah.

[00:12:11] **Chrissy:** It can be dizzying when you first do it, for sure. That was my experience dancing anyway. Mm-hmm. When I first danced, and actually it was, um, uh, this was gonna come up later in my mind, but I'm bringing it up right now.

[00:12:22] We went, I went on vacation in February. We were heading north to do a bit of skiing, and so we went to Canada and, uh, we were in Waterville area, and so we popped into the dance that was there, and of course it was all in French, and I don't speak French, so it was a, it was a whole brain thing of navigating, just trying to observe what other people were doing and figure out what to do.

[00:12:44] And it gave me a real insight into what it's like for people who come for the first time to any dance. Mm-hmm. You know, I was an experienced dancer. And I was having to navigate that, wow, I have no idea what to do next. I can't understand this. These terms make no sense. And, and it just, [00:13:00] yes, (?) Yes.

[00:13:01] The

[00:13:01] **Yann:** Geometry of this dance, like what? Being thrown into like the, the beginner mind. Same way if you, if you pick up an instrument you ever played and you realize, oh, that's how it is to be beginning at an instrument. It's a good reminder, I think, for you as a caller, for me as an instrumental teacher to remember how it feels when you've never barely touched an instrument or barely danced.

[00:13:21] **Chrissy:** Exactly. Okay. Wow. There's so many little threads. So, each of you had a little background in music and it sounds like you had rich musical childhoods, even if you didn't have a ton of trad stuff or if you did even. But then eventually, somehow you all ended up playing music. Like, this is, this is what you do.

[00:13:39] Anybody wanna talk a little bit about that sort of personal path into playing trad music? Well,

[00:13:44] **Nicholas:** Maybe, I mean, I can talk about my path, you know, so I went to school for music. It's just something I always loved. You know, I had a, a certain level of, like, it came to me easily while I was at school and I was like, oh, this is kind of fun.

[00:13:59] I enjoyed playing music, [00:14:00] but I never had any kind of specific ambition necessarily for something I really like. I never, I'm not someone who like at the age of 11 saw perhaps Jethro Toll on stage and said like, I wanna be that flute player when I, when I grow up. Or, um, you know, for me it was just. I always appreciated any kind of musical activity, you know, like school bands or whatever.

[00:14:22] I was in some choirs, uh, at school and, and then, so just ended up saying, ah, I could go to, could do an undergrad degree in music. Uh, I went to York University in Toronto and still just loved just exploring. It was a very kind of open school. There was a big world music program, ethnomusicology program, and so they had all these, uh, incredible, um, musicians coming in and leading like, uh, like a Chinese orchestra class or Cuban drumming class or Indian music, there.

[00:14:51] And so I, I was really just loved that and kind of ate it all up, but still kind of aimlessly, you know, it wasn't leading to a, a, a very [00:15:00] distinct career path, let's say. Um, luckily my parents were not the type to start start getting, asking me questions like, so son, how, where's this leading you? They, they were, they were happy to, let me just explore a little bit.

[00:15:17] So it was towards the end of that where I started getting into the traditional music scene. There was an Irish jam session going on at the campus, and that got me hooked into some of the, well, the contra dance scene in Toronto, actually, and with some, some great musicians, uh, the band, uh, uh, Flap Jack, you know, Teilhard, uh, Karen and Jay and who were, you know, had a lot of time, a lot of good times playing music with them.

[00:15:39] Um, and then that kind of got me curious about the, the traditional music of Quebec. And I ended up coming out to a festival in Quebec, this great festival memoir and the, and, and, uh, met so many great people and was just really, just loved the vibe of what was going on there. So I decided to try to move to, to Quebec, try it [00:16:00] out, and, uh, liked it.

[00:16:01] And I've been there, been there ever since. But I think for me, what what drew me into really wanting to make a big place for traditional music and especially dance. Music is that it's, it's so, it's so satisfying. It's so in the moment, you know, like especially doing four years of undergrad music where it was all about like, you know, conceptualizing ways to push the limits of things that had never been done.

[00:16:27] And it was so, I don't know. So kind of like, uh, the, the never ending chasing after the carrot of the next great possible thing that I, I kind of got a little bit tired of that and, and, and was just really just really loved. These, these experiences that were just all about full-on presence and enjoying the moment and having a good time.

[00:16:50] And, and I think, um, for me, that's what drew me really into the, in the traditional music world. As opposed to this sense of like, wow, I really want to preserve this [00:17:00] culture. And uh, and a link to a historical side of it for me is all about just like finding things that are just super satisfying in the moment.

[00:17:08] Yeah. And so that's, but, and, and I remember, I remember this one conversation I had when I was at school, um, where we had this big, you know, and there's some cafe at night with a bunch of music students, this big conversation of whether a composer has to take into account what the audience would like to hear, you know, and this is, and some people are like, no, you're sacrificing your artistic integrity.

[00:17:32] If you think about, if you're, if you think, if you give two thoughts. About what people wanna hear, you know, then you're, you're immediately sacrificing your artistic integrity. You should just be true to your inner vision. And, and then other people are like, wow, no, the audience is a part of the, the process.

[00:17:47] And, and I feel like that kind of issue is really, I don't know that that kind of sums up the way that I've approached my career in, in that it's this balance of like, oh, what, what are people looking for? You [00:18:00] know, what, what, uh, what seems to be, uh, uh, missing? Or, or what, what's the call

for? But balancing that was something that's actually like, I feel like is satisfying and fun and exciting to do, and you know, so I feel like that's the, the dance that I've been doing for the last, uh, 25 years or so.

[00:18:18] Yeah. And it's changed a lot. It's morphed for a while. I was, you know, with Crowfoot, we were playing for contra dances, uh, all the time, which was really great. Had a lot of really great experiences and then was kind of ready for something a little bit different. And then, you know, gone, uh, spent years, um, accompanying ballet classes as a piano player.

[00:18:38] Uh, now I'm doing a lot of song leading, a lot of like community singing, which I feel like is somewhat just responding to like, wow, that's what is really alive and people are really interested in right near me. So

[00:18:52] **Chrissy:** Meeting another need, right? Like, like, yeah, getting, serving in a way because people need that too.

[00:18:58] Like people need to be [00:19:00] connected with each other and singing together and having that. Community spiritedness, like we're all in it together.

[00:19:08] **Nicholas:** For sure in the

[00:19:08] **Chrissy:** Moment kind of thing.

[00:19:10] **Nicholas:** Yeah, yeah.

[00:19:10] **Chrissy:** Yeah.

[00:19:11] **Nicholas:** And so that's how, you know, like some people like, and, and I'm very grateful and thankful that I've, you know, it's been 25 years or so that I've been doing music as a profession.

[00:19:20] And, and, but I think that that's, that's been my, uh, approach to it is this like balancing act of figuring out how to, how to surf, what is, uh, what's, what, what I feel like is, uh, people are interested in, but also like following an, an inner musical compass. You know, like some people are really like, really clear about what they wanna offer the world and will maybe just like work hours and hours and tire tirelessly to get their vision out there.

[00:19:48] And sometimes. Like more, like 90% of the time it probably doesn't work, but then that 10% of the time you have these incredible artistic visionaries

that get out there. And that's, that's kind of, not, [00:20:00] not that that I've chosen. I feel like it's a, you know, it's like the, the, the, the people that I make music for and with are kind of like, seems like a dance partners.

[00:20:08] Like, oh, where do you

[00:20:08] **Chrissy:** Want to go now? Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Like the leading and following.

[00:20:11] **Nicholas:** Yeah.

[00:20:11] **Chrissy:** Um, okay, so in the moment, I wanna hear from you two as well, but now I wanna hear more music.

[00:20:16] **Music:** Yeah.

[00:20:17] **Chrissy:** And before we do that, actually, let's just harken right back to the beginning of the show, that I started yapping about that tune because it was one that the All Comers Band has incorporated.

[00:20:28] But can you tell us about that tune and how it came to you? Whoever brought it to the band?

[00:20:32] **Pascal:** The, the first one we played? Yeah. I think I have an idea of how it came to me personally. Uh, there was the artistic director of a festival in Montreal. He used to play in all the jam sessions at his festival, which was called.

[00:20:48] His name is, and, uh, he would play these tunes, these to me at the time, like a long time ago, they, they were accordion tunes and eventually they're the tunes I [00:21:00] didn't like. But hearing them and seeing how people were having fun playing them over the years, it kind got me over that, uh, kind of fear. Yeah. Yeah.

[00:21:12] So for me, I think it's playing those tunes in jam sessions. Yeah.

[00:21:19] **Yann:** Yeah. I think I, it's definitely around Montreal. It's a favorite of accordion players and there's a, a good crew, including Gilles and Carman, um, of great accordion players based in Montreal. So I think a lot of that repertoire is played in jams, but yeah, it's, it's attributed to the Montagnard Laurentiens which I think maybe they wrote, if not they, it was a part of the repertoire.

[00:21:40] It was a, a band who played for radio shows for many, many years. Uh. Couple decades I think, of playing on a, a regular show in Quebec City named Montagnard Laurentiens, uh, fantastic Band.

[00:21:53] **Chrissy:** Oh,

[00:21:53] **Pascal:** That is good background

[00:21:54] **Yann:** With like, glorious

[00:21:55] **Pascal:** Legend says that there was hockey night, but people
[00:22:00] felt like listening to the Montagnard Laurentiens before, so it was more important than hockey.

[00:22:06] And they would like tune into hockey after multi what it was competing with hockey. That is a great legend.

[00:22:15] **Chrissy:** I love it.

[00:22:16] **Nicholas:** They took on hockey. Wow. Kind of hard to

[00:22:19] **Chrissy:** Imagine. Okay. And then the tunes that you're gonna play now, maybe it, just a snippet about them.

[00:22:22] **Nicholas:** Yeah. Maybe these are, uh, examples of tunes that Pascal would've liked as a kid.

[00:22:27] Yeah. Here in more like, kind of aligned, uh, with like Irish or Scottish Tunes, uh, um, we're gonna play. Uh, and uh, and she could see me.

[00:22:45] **Chrissy:** And I, all of these will be in the show notes, so if you don't speak French, like I don't, then you can get the scoop on the names of these tunes. Mm-hmm. All right. Well.[00:23:00] [00:24:00] [00:25:00] [00:26:00] [00:27:00]

[00:27:25] Well, those three tunes, are those part of your regular repertoire stuff?

[00:27:29] **Yann:** Yeah, they are. They are. We, it's part of the story, in fact, one of the very few tunes that we play both for sometime for concerts.

[00:27:36] **Music:** Yep.

[00:27:37] **Yann:** Very often for dances. 'cause there's just four, uh, three reels that are, uh, square fit for the contra dance form.

[00:27:43] Uh, and we've recorded them on one of our EPs.

[00:27:46] **Chrissy:** Oh yeah. Which one?

[00:27:48] **Yann:** Uh, it's, I believe it's the September EP. Oh, okay. Yes. It's called, we were Good Memory. We released, uh, four EPs, I remember because it's the first video. We did one video per EP and [00:28:00] on the first one we did a little video. So if you look on Facebook, uh, you can find a video of us lip syncing to the recording of these tunes.

[00:28:09] 'cause we were not in the same space. We, we recorded. Uh, it's crazy. This is 2021. Yeah. Yeah. 2021. Uh, in fact, 2020. Oh, 20. Yeah. Because it was the 20th anniversary of Genticorum. So remotely we managed to record some music and make a video where we each played in our own little isolated bubble. And, uh, were joined by the marvelous, uh, magic of technology.

[00:28:33] Oh, amazing.

[00:28:35] **Chrissy:** Together and yet apart. Yep.

[00:28:37] **Yann:** Yep, yep, yep.

[00:28:37] **Chrissy:** Wow. Speaking of memories. Wow. Okay. That's great. And, um, you said something about straight tunes or, uh, yeah,

[00:28:45] **Yann:** Yeah, yeah. I mean that's, that's definitely a, a learning curve that every single Quebecois band will have if they play contra. It's, it's not, uh, it's, it is pretty common for Quebecois band to be called to be, to play contra dance.

[00:28:56] 'cause the music is very similar. The rhythm is similar. Is it? People [00:29:00] here, uh, love to play Quebecois tunes for contra dances. So there are bands is like, if you can think like Run Mary Domino, uh, Mattapat, over the years, you know, played for contra dances. But all the bands, I think there's always an experience.

[00:29:13] You start, you play your first dance and you'll play what you would normally play, play for a Quebec dance. And then the caller suddenly looks at you with uh, uh, uh, rage in their eyes or confusion in their eyes. 'cause you either you play a tune that has, you know, three parts, maybe there's just a little extra beat in one of the parts.

[00:29:32] Just one beat, one, one beat. Yeah.

[00:29:34] **Pascal:** What's

[00:29:34] **Yann:** One beat that works? That, that passes in the Quebec dance, but, uh, not, not in contra dance. So you guys a lot more regimented, uh, with your tunes? I've had the experience. The experience, but

[00:29:47] **Pascal:** I'm not sure if it's so common. Like you mentioned three bands. That come that, that played quite a lot in the contra dance scene.

[00:29:55] But if you think of all the Quebecois bands, well, what's [00:30:00] the percentage of them who play that come and play for dances in the south of the border?

[00:30:08] **Nicholas:** Did it? Well, and also the, the dances in Ottawa and, and Montreal and Quebec City Contra dances too. That's coming. I know in Ottawa there's a, yeah, there's a lot of, they get, they love having musicians from Quebec to come play there.

[00:30:22] Yes.

[00:30:22] **Pascal:** Musicians from Quebec. That's not my point. My point is a band like, um, for example, Le or, uh, I'm sure they played for Contra Dance

[00:30:31] **Yann:** Once in their Life. I thought the one, what's the name

[00:30:34] **Pascal:** of that band?

[00:30:34] **Yann:** Yeah. Which one?

[00:30:35] **Chrissy:** Long ago. Horns. (La Boutinne Souriante) Oh yeah. Well,

[00:30:38] **Yann:** I, I mean, I wouldn't be surprised if they did it here or there.

[00:30:41] They're not exactly. Especially since they have the horn band. They're definitely a, a show band. I'm not sure that they would, but

[00:30:46] **Pascal:** What he was saying is that it, some band have made a career out of doing that. Oh, completely. Some Quebecois bands have made a career out of Ho Band. Plus we

[00:30:53] **Chrissy:** love them over here.

[00:30:54] It's happy music.

[00:30:55] **Yann:** Yeah. Yeah. And I think it's completely compatible. On almost every aspect. [00:31:00] Yeah. Except the (?) where you're just like, which is safer old time musician musicians. Right? Yeah. Like southern old time

[00:31:05] **Chrissy:** musicians have the same problem. In fact, I've worked with New England musicians, right.

[00:31:09] Who you would think would know. But then they're like, oh, we love this tune. And then I'm like, blah, that is a slip jig that does not work. Right. So I think, or or I actually recently had the, uh, experience of an amazing band that I love dearly, uh, launched into a tune that's in the chestnut repertoire.

[00:31:28] Mm-hmm. Which means that the tune has to go with dance. Like dancing goes Exactly. With one particular dance. Right. And it, it was incredible for me just because that was part of my experience dancing, but to hear that tune, I just freaked out because I couldn't call the dance that I was trying to call, because all I could think about was the dance that went with the tune.

[00:31:47] Oh, it was

[00:31:49] **Yann:** a very, well, this is a grave offense. For a non Quebec band, but Quebec band have a have the excuse, Get outta jail

[00:31:58] **Pascal:** Free. Yes. Yes, yes, [00:32:00] yes. But I, I remember so, so many times, like when we get up on stage and then the caller turns to us and says, okay, guys, only square tunes. Yes. Right? And then, and Oh yeah, no problem.

[00:32:13] **Yann:** Even our understanding of what it is a square tune evolved over time. First, we, okay. We are gonna eliminate the worst ones. Yeah. Surely we can do this one. And then, yeah, it got a little narrower over the years. But

they are, but slowly, fortunately, they're countless tunes and we can play ones we know.

[00:32:31] **Chrissy:** Countless,

[00:32:32] **Yann:** countless, countless, oh yeah, yeah. Endless list. But it's just that the ones that we love or that come to mind in the moment, maybe not the,

[00:32:41] **Chrissy:** which is, which is a constraint of contra dancing. That doesn't happen with square dancing, for example,

[00:32:46] **Pascal:** Uhhuh, right? Yeah, totally. Um, so we had to make a list.

[00:32:50] **Speaker 3:** Yeah.

[00:32:50] **Pascal:** Like we make lists of the tunes that do work. 'cause over the years we even realized even if it has the right number of beats, it might not work right. If [00:33:00] the accent

[00:33:00] **Yann:** is displaced in the deep part. Yeah. There's some subtle things that you discover at. For me,

[00:33:04] **Nicholas:** it's, it is, it is. You can tell like it's exactly the same problem when you have someone with a really thick.

[00:33:09] Quebecois accent speaking in English is like, the emphasis is on the wrong syllable. Yeah. You sound exactly like a que. I do. Don't, I've been working on it.

[00:33:18] **Music:** is all around. Yes.

[00:33:21] **Chrissy:** I'll say the fact that you're even thinking about this, it is really important actually, because some, some bands don't even consider that, like, does this work?

[00:33:30] You know, and they'll be playing a tune and I'll say, wow, uh, that doesn't work because of the emphasis, you know, how, how it, the, um, just the rhythm and um, and

[00:33:39] **Yann:** Right. And of course there's a whole science and you can go deep within the straight tune and you start to talk with people like Lisa Greenleaf.

[00:33:46] They have a really strong opinion of like the vibe of the, or even the key, the most major minor. And she will, you know, oh no, that's you, because she knows all the tunes. You can say, can we do this one? She, no, no, not this one. Or, or how about this ki because she knows the [00:34:00] kibes even so. Yeah. And Nick, Nick, having toured with, with Crowfoot, there was a big thing, maybe we could talk about that with a band, but Nick's arrival in the band, uh, about, yeah, happened about halfway through the life of this band at this point, maybe more or less, give or take, uh, was one of the big thing that he brought his expertise in playing for dances.

[00:34:20] Uh, had played with Crowfoot. He could read a dance card. He knew we thought Pascal and I like, that's a perfect tune for this. And Nick was like, no, this,

[00:34:27] **Pascal:** no, this doesn't fit at all.

[00:34:30] **Yann:** Are you crazy? Uh, and that was a, a big thing of the life of the group. 'cause we had played with this guy, Alex, for, you know, between 10 and 15 years together.

[00:34:38] Nick arrived gradually and instead of recording an album right away and get gigs right away, 'cause kinda the wheel had the slow down a lot for the group, we kinda snuck into the dance circuit quite a bit because of Nick's contacts. Because also we had been asked to play dances for a couple of years and we would say no 'cause it wouldn't fit with our schedule of concerts.

[00:34:57] But in this kind of downtime, [00:35:00] we started with more dances and, and that was a big, huge part of the Genticorum 2.0 with Nicholas Williams, uh, in the band to start

[00:35:08] **Music:** Yeah.

[00:35:09] **Yann:** With the kind of, uh, musical lab that is a contra dance. So

[00:35:12] **Music:** yeah,

[00:35:12] **Yann:** A lot of our first arrangements were, were made on the dance floor. You know, like all these tune go great together.

[00:35:18] We could maybe record them or let's write a tune that would fit for a dance. So it's, yeah, it's a big part of the DNA of this group. Even though we don't do that much dances, we love to do them, but it's a big part of how it started. Yeah.

[00:35:31] **Chrissy:** Like the ground floor. Yeah. Wow. Uhhuh.

[00:35:33] **Yann:** So, and then we, we took that into our concert, you know,

[00:35:37] **Chrissy:** sound.

[00:35:37] Yep. I love that.

Break

[00:35:49] **Chrissy:** Belfast Flying Shoes is a participatory arts nonprofit. With a mission to build community and cultivate wellbeing through the joy of traditional music and dance for people of all backgrounds and [00:36:00] identities in Midcoast, Maine. In addition to this radio program and podcast, we have concerts, workshops, a monthly community and contra dance series, other dances, school residencies, and programs for incarcerated men and for older adults.

[00:36:16] Learn more@belfastflyingshoes.org. We are also a proud affiliate member of CDSS, the Country Dance and Song Society. They connect and support people in building and sustaining vibrant communities through participatory dance, music, and song. To find out more about their camps, affiliate services, other programs and resources for music and dance throughout North America, visit cdss.org.

[00:36:44] Let's get back to the show.

Second Half

[00:36:50] **Nicholas:** I mean, I'd love to just talk about the, the, the, you know, we're kind of hinting at this difference when we're talking about crooked tunes and, and like, why. Why Quebecois dance musicians would play them, [00:37:00] because the, you know, it works for dances in Quebec because the dance, the dance figures aren't tied to the phrase, so it's really the, the band's prime kind of function in and for Quebecois dance is just to pump out this incredibly powerful, groovy beat.

[00:37:16] It's like, and that people can just dance whatever figure to, and then sometimes the caller might slow them down or wait for a square to, uh, to catch up. But. The whole, while there's this incredible energy going on, so it doesn't really matter how, how, how the phrases align as long as you have, you're like, uh, putting out something that's just really, really danceable.

[00:37:39] Mm-hmm. Compared to contra dancing where people play so much with the phrasing and this, this idea that, okay, well we know that, uh, in another eight beats we're gonna come to the top of the dance again. So you can do all kinds of more maybe subtle things, like even almost drop out and the dancer, you know exactly when to come back in for the, the top of the move.

[00:37:57] And, and I feel like, you know, Jan was [00:38:00] saying, talking about this musical laboratory that, that we had playing for a lot of contras. I think that's, that's one of the things that's kind of maybe infused our sound compared to other Quebecois bands where when maybe we will play more with just leaving. Leaving space, this idea that the, the, the groove, the groove is going on, but we don't have to kind of be at maximum sound pressure all the time, you know, like to Yeah.

[00:38:25] Which for me, I, I feel like that that ties into this contra band aesthetic where bands can permit themselves to kind of like, hold back or play more sparsely because the dancers are coming around, they're holding the musical phrase in a way. And that, that, that opens, uh, up a lot of opportunity for different, like, musically creative ideas, I find.

[00:38:46] But I love it. I mean, I, I love just kind of seeing the differences between these relationships with music and dance all. And like you were talking about the, these chestnut tune as well, and there's some, there's some, like the older, uh, in, [00:39:00] in Quebec, there are dance dances in Quebec that do have, that there's a, a tune for the specific dance.

[00:39:06] But I, I don't know, Pascal, like, would people, like if we, if we were playing. The wrong tune for uh, pat. You know, say Pierre Chartrand was out there dancing. Would he be like, I can't dance this. It's not the right tune.

[00:39:19] **Pascal:** Some people would say that probably, but yeah. Most people don't dance quadrilles anymore. Dance callers are always a little like, uh, yeah, kind of.

[00:39:30] They don't really want to get into that at dancing this, 'cause it takes such a long time to explain. And then you only dance, each part lasts only for like three or four minutes.

[00:39:41] **Chrissy:** Those are the quadrilles. Yeah.

[00:39:42] **Pascal:** So like you explain for seven, eight minutes and then it lasts three, four minutes at the quadrille resets.

[00:39:50] Then you explain some more same kind of deal. Uh, so it takes like a, a whole hour to, or 45 minutes to dance the whole quadrille and

[00:39:59] **Music:** [00:40:00] mm-hmm.

[00:40:01] **Pascal:** So, and uh, to answer your question, listening to what's been recorded of Quadrille sets. The opinion of the musician has a lot to do Uhhuh with the direction of the right tune.

[00:40:17] 'cause like for, for like the quadrille, like the quintessential quadri five parts, uh, like ano and, uh, they all have names. We have some wildly different sets of tunes recorded for like that quadrille. So some of them you have a figure that you absolutely need to just stop. But if you're a good musician, you just hold out on one.

[00:40:43] People are bowing to each other and they're, and you go back into it. So,

[00:40:50] **Chrissy:** so you're really watching the musicians. If you, if you're gonna do the quadrilles,

[00:40:53] **Pascal:** you are really watching the dancers paint the

[00:40:55] **Chrissy:** dancers, I mean, yeah,

[00:40:56] **Pascal:** yeah, yeah, yeah. Really watching the dancers. And you know what, like we're going to do [00:41:00] Les.

[00:41:00] Okay. Next part is Les. Okay. Well, most people will play the tune that is called.

[00:41:22] So they played that tune, but like we could play any kind of marchy six eight and, and you're watching the dancer.

[00:41:29] **Chrissy:** You can, just, crazy. Exactly.

[00:41:32] **Pascal:** Which is another thing that we maybe we do with contra dance, that that's fun. You watch the dancers and the Yeah. Influences the mood of

[00:41:41] **Nicholas:** what you're playing

[00:41:42] **Pascal:** and Yeah.

[00:41:43] **Nicholas:** Mm-hmm. And vice versa. 'cause maybe many, many dance musicians in Quebec that

[00:41:49] **Pascal:** never

[00:41:50] **Nicholas:** gone on dance.

[00:41:50] **Pascal:** Exactly.

[00:41:52] **Yann:** An unstoppable train. Yeah. Never look at the roof and notes. Yeah. Just funk. Yeah. Serves a. It function really well, [00:42:00] but different vibe. Yeah.

[00:42:01] **Chrissy:** Yeah. Amazing.

[00:42:03] **Yann:** Should we play a crooked tune? Oh,

[00:42:05] **Chrissy:** yeah. Yeah. Play crooked tune, yeah.

[00:42:06] To go back

[00:42:06] **Yann:** to, because nobody's dancing,

[00:42:07] **Nicholas:** so nobody's looking. Yeah. Nobody

[00:42:09] **Chrissy:** dancing. Nobody will mind. I won't mind. I mean,

[00:42:12] **Nicholas:** do you wanna do that? Uh, sha down. Yeah. This is a nice tune. It is funny. Uh, yeah. A it's a really nice tune. It's almost like a, it almost feels like maybe an English country dance tune.

[00:42:24] Yeah. Uh, you know, uh, it's also something that from my, like I remember when I was playing a lot for Contra Dances that there was this big wave of like maybe getting away from the real notey reels that are, are just kind of so like, full on and playing more lyrical things like some English tunes or, or like ton tunes or, uh, and uh, this one, it kind of has that, that field.

[00:42:49] It's nice to Lace Dam. I don't know where it comes from. It's from Andrea. Yeah. It's

[00:42:54] **Yann:** not, I mean, it's not that we tend to down pretty slow. Yeah.

[00:42:58] **Nicholas:** But it is,

[00:42:59] **Chrissy:** it's not always pretty. [00:43:00]

[00:43:00] **Yann:** It's a little gritty when it's the original fiddler. No, he plays it

[00:43:02] **Pascal:** like a normal reel.

[00:43:03] **Nicholas:** Yeah. And he plays it. Yeah. Yeah. But maybe we'll play it.

[00:43:08] I dunno. So, so this is a tune that has, it's, it could easily fall into that category that, you know, Pascal and End we're talking about, have tunes that, like, they sound, they don't really sound crooked. You could easily be forgiven for thinking that this is a straight tune, but there's just this one little moment that goes by that adds an extra beat since you can, uh, spot the spots a moment.

[00:43:28] We, we'll, we'll play it like, in its, its original crooked version. Play that

[00:43:32] **Pascal:** tune and only that tune. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay. For

[00:43:35] **Yann:** a little bit.

[00:43:35] **Nicholas:** Yeah.

[00:43:36] **Yann:** That the original version is not maybe as floaty as we do it for dancing, but it's been also recorded by Jean Paul Ye and a bunch of great musician who have a Yeah.

[00:43:45] Slightly more floaty version that. Inform me be how we play it there. Fun.[00:44:00] [00:45:00] [00:46:00]

[00:46:36] **Nicholas:** So we like that. You know, we just like that tune so much that we decided to perform a, a small. Surgical operation to, to, to make it, uh, fit with a contra dance phrasing.

[00:46:50] **Chrissy:** Yeah. I could feel that. But for you, I found that one part was,

[00:46:52] **Nicholas:** it's original.

[00:46:53] **Chrissy:** The original was really good. Yes.

[00:46:54] **Yann:** Um, adulterated and I, I

[00:46:57] **Chrissy:** did feel it.

[00:46:58] **Yann:** Yeah. Yeah. Yes. [00:47:00] We saw the, the gag reflex every time we went to that because he had a, I lost track of my rhythm. No, I did not get so delicious. Couldn't

[00:47:09] **Chrissy:** read. Don't say that young. Um, speaking of saying, um, so you guys, you, you were, you know, Yann and Pascal, you were Genticorum for years, I mean, with Alex

[00:47:21] **Pascal:** together.

[00:47:22] **Chrissy:** Yes. But I mean, how did, how did you find each other?

[00:47:26] **Pascal:** Hmm. A house party

[00:47:28] **Chrissy:** Really, for real?

[00:47:29] **Pascal:** Yeah. Yeah. Some friends, uh, were moving to Montreal and they had like a housewarming party and eventually Yann Falquet showed up and like some people at the party, which I had just met that evening. I've been

talking about that guitar player that might show up the best in the world, like they've been talking him up the whole evening and, uh, yeah, the, maybe that's not like a, that there's a side story to [00:48:00] this.

[00:48:00] We had been paid, um, we had, my band at the time had been, uh, had played for a, a gig at a CGEP at a, like a, it's a school, like a Oh, CGEL. Yeah. After high school you go to CGEP and then you go to university, and then the, the organizers didn't have money to pay us, so they gave us so many a truck full of beer.

[00:48:22] So we had the fridge full of beer for that party and just jamming and like giving beer to everybody who would come in through the door. And eventually Yann Falquet showed in through the door totally sober. I think, and we were like way, and then we just jam way, way late into the evening. And that's how we met.

[00:48:45] **Chrissy:** And since you were sober when it started, was that an, an accurate retelling of the day?

[00:48:49] **Yann:** Well, I heard about rumors of large amount of beer. Uh, and so I made my way to that apartment and uh, sure enough it delivered.[00:49:00]

[00:49:02] **Chrissy:** Okay. There must have been more after that though, you know?

[00:49:04] **Yann:** Uh, well we played, we busked in the streets of Montreal for a little bit. We had a first iteration of the band that's very not well known, but there was a trio at some point with a different person, uh, that passes Pascal plays with these days. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

[00:49:17] But her friend Daniella, she was part of a short version of, of the band, and he played the mostly didgeridoo. So there's a version of Jean with didgeridoo, fiddle and guitar. He and percussions, he played bones, percussions, but uh. Yeah. At that time we, we were realized quickly, we were like a different kinda motivation level to form a band.

[00:49:38] And, uh, Pascal was, uh, I mean Alex was, uh, showed up and, uh, we were very aligned just kind of musically together, so that, that became the band very, very early couple weeks or months after the beginning of the trio. Yeah. Alex was coming to those shows, at least go

[00:49:55] **Pascal:** in Montreal. Yeah. He and he

[00:49:57] **Yann:** played

[00:49:57] **Pascal:** in

[00:49:57] **Yann:** those

[00:49:57] **Pascal:** shows too.

[00:49:58] Yeah. Yeah. That's where we [00:50:00] met Alex. Wow. Yeah.

[00:50:02] **Chrissy:** Wow. All right.

[00:50:03] **Nicholas:** I I, I'm actually just realizing it was the first time that I met you was I was a didgeridoo player. We meet that, that when, oh, 'cause you were playing with, we met, you were playing with Into the Woods. So it's like the role of the didgeridoo in Genticorum's story.

[00:50:19] It's great. It's like opening the, the spirit world to show the, the path for we members. We closed the door very quickly to the spirit world.

[00:50:30] **Yann:** Wow. Yes.

[00:50:32] **Chrissy:** Wow. Went

[00:50:33] **Yann:** into the camp of did. Don did.

[00:50:38] **Chrissy:** Oh wow. Well now you, let's see. We talked earlier about uh, where you guys are from and, um, Nicholas and Pascal, you alluded to a little bit of a, um, sort of a focal point or a

[00:50:52] **Nicholas:** epicenter.

[00:50:53] **Chrissy:** Epicenter. Epicenter. Oh yeah, yeah. Waterville, epicenter and Waterville. Where I've been to the epicenter in [00:51:00] Waterville, I've been to Brattleboro as well.

[00:51:01] Also definitely an epicenter. You guys are, you have like a little bit of a dance scene there

[00:51:06] **Pascal:** going. A little bit thanks

[00:51:09] **Nicholas:** to Nicholas. Nicholas is the one who started it. It's, it's funny, it's, it's a little bit like, kind of like the wild west for, in terms of dance scenes there in that there's like, it's a town with all tons of people that really love the idea of getting together as a community and doing things, but that without necessarily a real strong, um, knowledge or wide connection to traditional dancing and music.

[00:51:34] Yeah. Yeah. I mean, some people when, you know, so we had the, these great, these community dances for a while where for a lot of people it was their first time doing dances. And, and we would, these would be like kabe choir dancers. Um. And when Pascal moved to Waterville, oh, seven years ago, seven, seven years ago with Marie Soleil, they kind of brought another, like reinforced the, the, these [00:52:00] dances and kind of connected them to the wider network of Quebecois dancers.

[00:52:05] So that was kind of nice. It got bonafide with, uh, more like people would start traveling a little more to, to, to come to these dances. Yeah, it's been, it is been fun. It has been a fun experiment. There's a lot of families and, and we, we, uh, implemented the, the Belfast Contra Dance model, which was amazing.

[00:52:24] Uh, the of the family dance, uh, with kind of like a community band playing acoustic before and that was incredible people. That's really responded well. Yeah. That's a big, big success. It's the

[00:52:38] **Pascal:** big events you are joining

[00:52:39] **Chrissy:** in.

[00:52:39] **Pascal:** It's always a, like a lot of people like SPAC for family dance.

[00:52:45] **Nicholas:** We actually, yeah, we, we had these dances for a while at this really nice that it was an old church that's now like a metal workers union.

[00:52:51] Uh, they own the building and we actually kind of got kicked outta that building because too many people came to the family dance [00:53:00] and some of the neighbors were worried about like, uh, fire safety and, uh, but because. You know, it wasn't a huge place and it just, the stars aligned that there's maybe what, like a hundred over a hundred people at this family dance in this like, relatively small place.

[00:53:17] But it's, it is gone like a lot of dance series. I mean, it's like up and down and up and down. And, uh, there's some moments where we've had like incredible, you know, a, a community band plus a kid's band on stage, like, you know, 30 musicians playing for this, uh, incredible family dance. And then other, other moments where it's been like, ah, we gonna be able to have like, uh, two sets of people dancing.

[00:53:41] It's been a lot of, a lot of up and down, but it's been a, an amazing Yeah. Focal point to the community.

[00:53:48] **Chrissy:** Yeah. The time we showed up, uh, in, uh, in this ski trip, um, Marie Soleil had some mentees, like some callers that she was working with.

[00:53:56] **Pascal:** Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. So Marie Soleil she's, [00:54:00] she's my partner in life and a dance scholar and musician.

[00:54:03] Like, she plays piano. She, she's doing more and more of that, but mainly, yeah, dancers. She's, she calls and, uh, yeah, with the, through the community center in Waterville, she started giving calling lessons. So there's three callers. Yeah. So you were there for the, the special events. We tried to get them involved, the, those, like, uh, new callers as much as possible.

[00:54:27] But now some of them I've, they're, they're getting like their own evening. Like they, they're getting hired to call for different events.

[00:54:36] **Chrissy:** That's so important.

[00:54:37] **Pascal:** Yeah.

[00:54:37] **Chrissy:** It's so good for passing the, like continuing the traditions. Right.

[00:54:40] **Pascal:** Uhhuh

[00:54:42] **Chrissy:** nurturing that, and she has such a great, she's a great dancer, but she also has such a great vibe, like, you know.

[00:54:50] You want to do what she tells you to do. Uhhuh, even if you don't speak the language.

[00:54:57] Yeah. Okay. So we often have a waltz at [00:55:00] some point and, uh, maybe you guys could play a little waltz.

[00:55:03] **Nicholas:** Beaulieu. That's Beaulieu. That's Beaulieu, yeah.

[00:55:06] **Chrissy:** What's the story with that waltz?

[00:55:08] **Nicholas:** Well, it's, uh,

[00:55:09] **Pascal:** I wrote it. You

[00:55:10] **Chrissy:** wrote it? Yeah. Pascal,

[00:55:11] **Pascal:** I wrote it,

[00:55:12] **Chrissy:** it like,

[00:55:13] **Pascal:** it, you know, sometimes you have to work really hard on tunes and like, perfect them over years.

[00:55:20] Completely the opposite. With this one, it just, I played it, it it appeared uh, within a half hour I was there. And, uh, it's kind of relatively easy to, to learn and pick up and it's pretty satisfying on the fiddle. So it's, it's gotten some good mileage

[00:55:38] **Chrissy:** from other people too. From

[00:55:40] **Pascal:** other people too. Uhhuh, so, uh, lava Bo and then got its name in Scotland.

[00:55:46] Oh, and the town of BLI, because Bley is actually Boer and we were looking for a name for the, the Dewal and some, someone suggested we should name it Beaulieu because we're in Bli and, [00:56:00] but it's Bli is supposed to be Boer, so Oh, wow. Yeah.

[00:56:04] **Nicholas:** French Beaulieu is French for a beautiful, beautiful place. Yeah, a nice one and a, oh yeah.

[00:56:11] So that's ly is the, the Scottish, uh, transformation of that French phrase of this is a beautiful place. So you could have a

[00:56:17] **Chrissy:** surname. Isn't it a surname as well?

[00:56:20] **Pascal:** Yes, it is. So you can have a

[00:56:21] **Chrissy:** surname that means beautiful place. Yes, exactly.

[00:56:24] **Pascal:** Some people do have that. Yeah. Wow.[00:57:00] [00:58:00]
[00:59:00] [01:00:00]

[01:00:33] **Chrissy:** Oh, Pascal. Yeah. I love that waltz.

[01:00:36] **Pascal:** Oh, thank you. Yeah.

[01:00:36] **Chrissy:** And you wrote it in Scotland?

[01:00:38] **Pascal:** I wrote it in Montreal when I was living in Montreal. Oh. In Montreal? In a very small apartment in Montreal. Oh,

[01:00:44] **Chrissy:** but you, but you named it in

[01:00:46] **Pascal:** Scotland. Yeah, exactly. Yeah. It traveled with Genticorum for many years before it got its name.

[01:00:51] **Chrissy:** Wow. Some people don't name their children for a little while, you know? Couple

[01:00:55] **Pascal:** weeks. Yeah. That's what we did.

[01:00:56] **Chrissy:** Yeah. Yeah.

[01:00:58] **Pascal:** So tunes [01:01:00] same with children.

[01:01:01] **Chrissy:** That's amazing. So great

[01:01:04] **Pascal:** tunes are like children.

[01:01:04] **Chrissy:** They are, they are. Yeah. Just

[01:01:07] **Pascal:** less, less time to look after them. Yeah. Once they're that's right into the world.

[01:01:10] And

[01:01:11] **Chrissy:** you like it when they're in the world. And that was played out a bit, you said? Yeah, yeah, yeah,

[01:01:15] **Pascal:** yeah. Yeah. Was played quite, quite a bit actually. Uh, was played at sessions a lot in around Quebec for, for a long time. And when people look for waltz to play, I think many times I hear that tune. It's just, oh, well they're playing, they're playing Valse Beaulieu.

[01:01:33] **Chrissy:** I liked watching the bow. It worked during it.

[01:01:38] **Pascal:** Uhhuh, yeah. Yeah. The waves. Yeah, the waves of waltzing.

[01:01:40] **Chrissy:** Uhhuh. Yeah. Yeah. Pretty great. Thank you. Oh, yeah. Hmm. Well, we're kind of getting toward the end here, but I am, I'm st. I wanna circle back to something you guys talked about earlier. You know, when the band, uh, personnel was in transition and Nicholas was kind of easing into playing a little bit [01:02:00] more with the band, and then before you started going deep into any recordings.

[01:02:04] I think, think Yann, it was you that said, okay, we started off playing a bunch of dances.

[01:02:08] **Yann:** Yeah. We did the

[01:02:09] **Chrissy:** Yeah,

[01:02:10] **Yann:** we played the, yeah, we played dance weekends. Um, and, and, uh, yeah, it was great. And for us it makes sense. 'cause, you know, we could travel, you know, usually a dance weekend, we'll bring you somewhere, fly you over to, to somewhere.

[01:02:22] You're there for the whole weekend. In that mindset, just playing dances after dance.

[01:02:27] **Chrissy:** Yeah. And then just be, and then also I would imagine just like. When you're playing for a dance set, it is a lot longer than a concert set. Uh, you know, in terms of minutes, right?

[01:02:38] **Yann:** Yeah. It's, it's exactly, it's, it's, in a way it's liberating maybe.

[01:02:42] Uh, yeah. I was talking about how we went from playing lots of concert to being thrown into this context. We played lots of dance. Uh, to be fair, we've played for dances throughout the career of Genticorum with Alex. We would do dances once in a while, but it just, it, it seemed like an important phase where we've just played more dances with Nicholas.

[01:02:58] Um, and yeah, I think the reason [01:03:00] I like it is we love to arrange music, uh, for concerts. That's something that all members of the band love to do. We love to rehearse, we love to tweak to, to put everything so, you know, have a nice arc for the listener to go through. We'll have to pick, pick people on a journey, uh, when they listen to the track and we're very conscious of, of how we build our arrangements.

[01:03:19] It's one of the pleasures we have. I mean, there's many facets of why we like this music, but I think the pleasure of arranging is something we share and what makes Genticorum what it is today. But when you get thrown in a dance, that part kind of, you don't think about it so much because it's first you start and you don't exactly know when it's gonna end because it's gonna end when the color tells you it's done.

[01:03:40] It can have a vague idea. It's, I dunno, 10 minutes from now, but the arc is not so important. There are some arcs forming, there's some movement, but there's something very liberating where you just play for playing. You're in the pleasure of the groove of, for me personally, the sound of the chords, how they go with the melody.

[01:03:56] And, you know, I could play the tune once. I could just play it one [01:04:00] more time. Pretty much exactly the same thing. Tweaking one thing, oh, I can, I can do it a little better. And that in that way it becomes a laboratory for Pascal too. He said, oh, I'm tapping this foot, my foot this way. And it's cool how the guitar can interact with that certain groove.

[01:04:14] Uh, so it's been great. And I think we've been able, like I said, to extract maybe, oh, it's like 16 really nice measures of groove that we've come to. Let's try to put that in arrangement later. Uh, but I think, yeah, if, yeah, looping back to that, that aspect of, of why we enjoy playing for dances is it gets us away completely from the concert mindset and just go like, full on play tunes, uh, at one after another.

[01:04:41] A little closer to what it is. When we play tunes in a party, like Pascal mentioned where we met, it was a harsh party. We just sit in a circle, play tunes all night. It has that aspect. You just play tune for the pleasure of playing

tunes. But of course, you know, now we know we won't play crooked tunes. We, we are very [01:05:00] mindful of the, it's unlikely we play crooked.

[01:05:02] Exactly. It may happen, it may happen, but we, we know, uh, a little better now.

[01:05:07] **Chrissy:** And I, I just could, I can imagine there's feedback in both having seen you in concert and also, um, of course dance to you. Uh, there's a certain feedback that you would get as playing for a concert. It goes

[01:05:19] **Yann:** back, you know, you're right.

[01:05:20] It goes both ways in the way that being, playing in dance have made us create new stuff, but being a concert band that plays for dances means that we'll sometime infuse the dance with maybe a section of an arrangement that works in the concert and we'll just throw it as is. It will maybe cover five times through the dance while we do our arrangement that we know works on the measures.

[01:05:39] But it will have this arc that we've carefully planned and may have a bridge that we know will fit, uh, with the contra dance. So yeah, we do bring elements of our concert into the contra dance, and I think people appreciate that. Sometime it, yeah, it comes, comes outta nowhere. Some, you know, go in some cool bridges that we've, you know, rehearsed and we know what to do, and then it's kind of fun to just go from there to [01:06:00] whatever, just, uh, dive in and leap just, uh, jump in the void and see what comes next.

[01:06:05] **Chrissy:** Yeah. And so I think, and some people have said that like people don't listen quite as critically. When they're dancing. Right, exactly. 'cause they're also dancing and doing their own thing.

[01:06:16] **Pascal:** Yeah. They're in the moment. I

[01:06:16] **Chrissy:** mean, there are still people I definitely listen a lot, uh, but who listen more tuned in.

[01:06:20] But I think some people are responding at a visceral level, but there maybe are not. Yeah. I don't know. I just think there would be a freedom to that in a way. Exactly. You could try some things out and

[01:06:31] **Pascal:** it's more a vibe.

[01:06:32] **Chrissy:** Yeah.

[01:06:33] **Pascal:** I think you're not, you're not listening to the finer details. You're in the vibe.

[01:06:37] And that's what I like about playing for dances. When we're playing for a concert, we are listening a lot more 'cause we can't see the people are not so well and you just, you, you have to feel the how people are at every little bit of space of the arrangement where you're at in the song. But the dance we see the, [01:07:00] the crowd.

[01:07:00] So I can, it's so easy. To like you, you, you're always like, as a musician, I'm always like, okay, I'm with the band. I'm with this huge group of people that are going crazy. I'm with the band. And then, yeah. And I think that's, that's one of the things that I enjoy a lot about is just, just so easy to tap into the energy of the people dancing.

[01:07:25] **Chrissy:** I think there's a little feedback loop too.

[01:07:27] **Pascal:** Yeah.

[01:07:27] **Chrissy:** You know, they tap into you, you tap into them, they tap into you. Yeah,

[01:07:33] **Pascal:** yeah, yeah,

[01:07:33] **Chrissy:** yeah. Which

[01:07:34] **Pascal:** is. Harder to do when a concert audience and people are sitting and self see and sometimes you can't see them very well.

[01:07:43] **Yann:** Right. Or they're just absorbed in the music and they're just like drooling with a, like a really weird face.

[01:07:48] They enjoy it to have the best time of their life, but their face is like on the offsetting, it's like screensaver mode.

[01:07:57] **Nicholas:** Well, you reminding me of the ultimate going from
[01:08:00] playing the for big dance events to the Zoom concerts of the COVID era. You finish this incredible set and it's like dead silent.

[01:08:09] That's nuts. That's not, we're be able to play for dancing.

[01:08:13] **Pascal:** It reminds me of something else. You're talking about the screensaver mode or just people reading like at festivals sometimes we play for concerts, festivals, people are. Knitting. They're not paying, they're not even looking at you. They're knitting.

[01:08:26] They're in that little zone, I think. I'm sure it's like, it's total bliss for them. 'cause they're doing like this repetitive thing that puts them in a trance and then they're listening to music that they like. But for you, the musician playing on stage will have a row of knitters in the first row was like, uh, okay.

[01:08:46] Yeah. And none of that at Contra Dance. Well, less of that. Much less. Much less.

[01:08:52] **Chrissy:** Yeah. It's definitely, it's two way street at a contra dance, you know, we're getting fed and you guys are putting it out there [01:09:00] for us, so Yes. Um, well we are pretty much at the end of our time for the show, but um, before I'm gonna ask you to play one more tune.

[01:09:09] Tell us a little bit about the set that I think you have a set in mind that you're gonna

[01:09:13] **Pascal:** play. We're going to play a brandy.

[01:09:15] **Chrissy:** A brandy?

[01:09:16] **Pascal:** Yeah. A reel in, in three beats.

[01:09:19] **Chrissy:** Oh,

[01:09:19] **Pascal:** yeah.

[01:09:20] **Chrissy:** A reel in three

[01:09:20] **Pascal:** beats. Yeah. So it's like, uh, it's not crooked because it's always the same, but it's doesn't fit at all with contra dance.

[01:09:28] So it's all the phrasing is in, uh, is in three. It's, it's,

[01:09:34] **Yann:** um, it's used for, uh, certain dances in Quebec, uh, where there's it's social dance that includes the step dance. So, um, people will dance at brandy and they step dance throughout the whole, uh, yeah, the whole dance. Um, but we thought they, we will play all of our contra dance tune tonight.

[01:09:52] So we'll, uh, treat ourselves with,

[01:09:55] **Chrissy:** put a brandy in now. With a brandy now. So good. And

[01:09:58] **Pascal:** this one was, [01:10:00] uh, written as a tribute to, uh, gi, a step dancer, I think. Step dancer. Yes. By Phillip Bruneau. Yeah. By Brandy, the GI.

[01:10:08] **Chrissy:** Well, before you start playing, I just would wanna remind our listeners to keep on supporting community music, community dance, community radio, and especially all of the musicians in those communities.

[01:10:23] **Yann:** Uh, thank you, Chrissy. It was a real pleasure to chat with you.

[01:10:25] **Chrissy:** Such a delight. Yeah, thanks. Thank you all for coming.

Outro

[01:13:46] **Chrissy:** Thank you for listening to the Flying Shoes Radio Hour podcast. Go to cdss.org/podcasts for show notes for today's episode, which will have info on the musicians and the tune they played. [01:14:00] A transcript of this show and links to other CDSS podcast episodes. Thank you to Great Meadow Music for the use of tunes from the album Green Mountain by Mary Cay Brass and Friends.

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