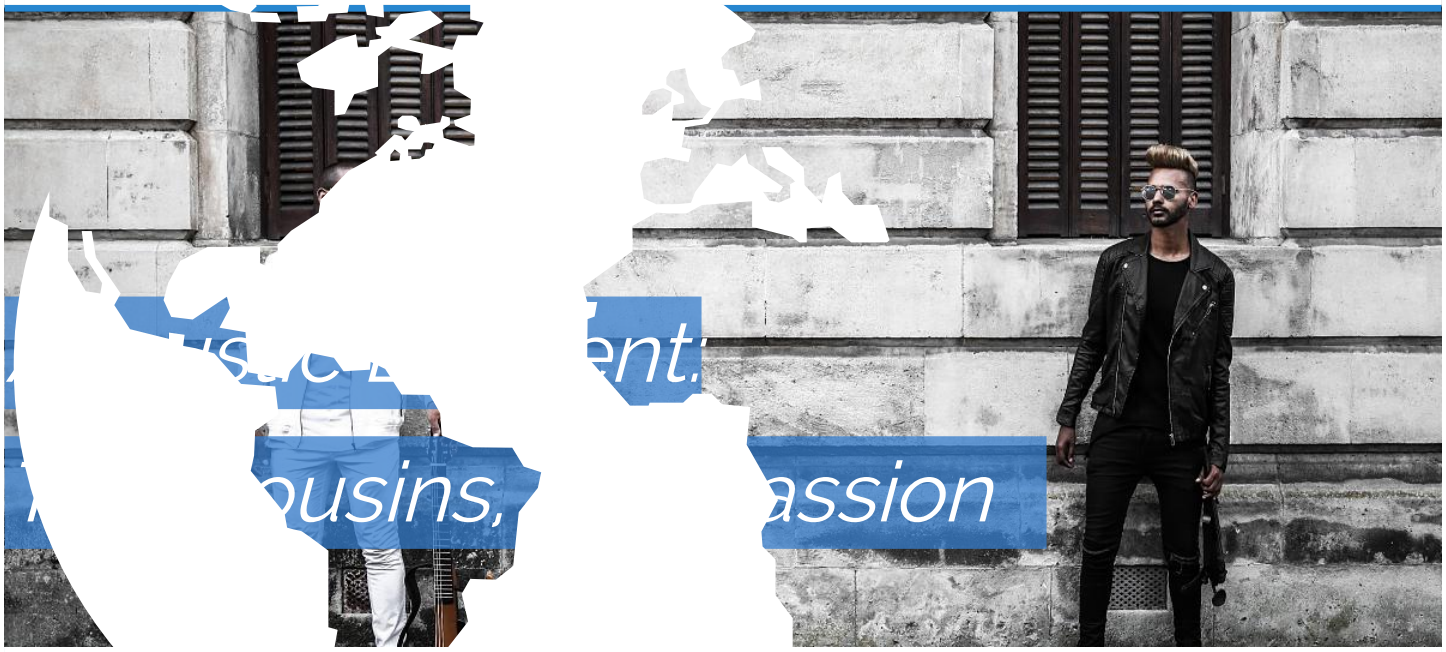


Jody Abel . len . . Africa are cousins. It is really a coincidence that they are an ac The ne about and what their expectations are at the International Youth Conven in . urea Stephens, of the New Apostolic television channel NACTV in South Africa.

Andrea Stephens: Tell me a little bit about how Acoustic Elements got started.

Callen Petersen: It was at Christmas in 2010. I had a new violin and Jody had a new guitar for Christmas. We are cousins and so we had family lunch together and then we went on to the roof of Jody's house and started playing music. We then walked down the street and started playing Christmas carols and someone threw some coins down and we thought; wow - we could make a business from this. That was great fun and since then the fun hasn't stopped.

Andrea Stephens: Where does your love and passion for music come from?

Jody Abel: I think it's always been a part of our lives. Since we were six we started playing the recorder and the piano. We played in the Church and in the school and we've been playing ever since. It's just that the instruments have changed a little bit.

Andrea Stephens: Being cousins and now working together, how has that changed your relationship?

Callen: Amazingly, it's got stronger.

Jody: We have a lot of cousins and in the first 20 years we weren't so close, but since ten years we've been inseparable.

Andrea Stephens: This has been a long journey. Please tell me, what have been the biggest things you have learnt and what are the highlights for you?

Callen: I would say the highlights for us have always been when you experience different parts of the world. You learn so much about different peoples and different cultures and you learn to respect different cultures.

Jody: We started a company between the two of us and we have learned a lot from that, from dealing with clients, being professional and just offering a service to a market.

Callen: We had to learn to make a business from a passion.

Andrea Stephens: You will be appearing before a very large audience at the International Youth Convention in Düsseldorf. How did it come about?

Jody: We were approached by the Church international youth committee a few months ago. We were actually in Greece and they asked us to do a portion of the IYC Song written by an Austrian woman by the name of Julia Meier: a wonderful lady and we made contact over Skype. We will play the original version of the song on Friday evening in Düsseldorf and on Saturday we will play a remix.

Off to new horizons

Andrea Stephens: You have a new project called "Alt Ego". Tell me a little bit about it.

Callen: Acoustic Element is very much original music, played in our case with a guitar and a violin. "Alt Ego" is music which also includes a DJ. It is music to dance to and is driven by stronger beats.

Jody: As Acoustic Element we play pop music on classical instruments. With "Alt Ego", we play classical music, for instance from Bach, and, connect it with dance music. In our new album we have played some cover versions of older songs from Depeche Mode, or Bananarama.

Andrea Stephens: You said that you both had studied and had degrees. Tell us a little bit more.

Jody: Callen had studied fashion design and I was an under graduate in media and a post graduate in marketing. I worked for eight months and Callen for two years. Then I said I've had enough, but we have brought some of our experiences from those times with us in our work; for instance, the fashion, because we stay fashionable, and when it's about marketing, that's where I come into play. Our studies therefore also have a role to play in Acoustic Element.

Andrea Stephens: What message would you give to other young people?

Jody: I'd say be fearless and be smart.

Callen: You need to take a risk and you need to be brave in your decision making, and you need to stand by your talent; but you also have to remember – it is a business and it is an incredible amount of hard work.

Visions for the future

Andrea Stephens: What are the future visions for you?

Callen: We will be travelling a lot this year, We are starting in Qatar, then we will come to Düsseldorf. We will drive to Austria, to Switzerland and then to Italy – oh, and then we are taking a holiday in Thailand. We've got a big international focus. We ideally want to spend Summer in Europe and then to South Africa

Jody: We are also planning to record two new albums.

Andrea Stephens: You are musicians and you are also New Apostolic Christians. How do you manage to strike that balance?

Jody: I think it's so easy. We grew up being New Apostolic. We have wonderful examples of parents. Going to Church and having a spiritual life is very important. Being New Apostolic and Church and God- they are all part of us.

Andrea Stephens: You played the recorder as your first instrument. How important was the instrument in your musical development?

Callen: It was like a gateway to any other instrument. We were really lucky that it was taught in the New Apostolic Church. From this, Jody started playing the trumpet; I started playing the violin. The recorder was the basis of all of our learning.

Jody: It gave us the love for music and understanding what music is all about.

Callen: ... and confidence: confidence to play in front of people.

Andrea Stephens: How do you manage your nerves when you have to stand in front of a crowd of people?

Callen (laughing): Oh, when it's a large crowd it's easy, because everyone just blurs into each other. As I said, we've played all our lives in front of people.

Jody: When you play the recorder you really learn to breath. When you can't, the people know that you're nervous: they can hear it.

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Text: Nicole Prestle



