

# Geraldine Schneider: The voice that will make Moravia dance



Photo: Geraldine Schneider

Geraldine Schneider is a jazz singer from Switzerland. Her story is part of the campaign **Our Compatriots**, created by the South Moravian region in collaboration with the Centre for Foreigners JMK. Through this campaign, we explore the stories of our compatriots. They lead us to places near and far, and we find out that all their stories end here, in South Moravia, where we work, create, and live together.

Geraldine begins her story by saying: "Love brought me to Brno. I met my boyfriend at a workshop in Slovenia. We tried to go long-distance, which worked really well, and it became clear to me that I want to follow him to Brno, and nowhere else. I'm a jazz singer, I go on tours, I teach singing. **Jazz is what I love.** Improvisation, the option to experiment, is its foundation and soul. That freedom is key for me."

## Music Connects

I studied in Bern; one of the four options that we have in the German-speaking part in Switzerland. We often joke about the Bern-Brno city names, that I didn't really make it that far from home. Bern has a long history of teaching jazz singing, and nowadays, there is a great focus on electronic and contemporary music. I would say that the tradition here in Brno is much younger and it is still evolving. I teach jazz singing at **JAMU** and also as a private tutor, but I think my favorite activity is the **Christmas Choir**. People from Moravia, but also Slovakia, Italy, France, and other countries meet and sign together. Music is a beautiful way to connect and to sing with more people is an indescribable experience. What I love the most about teaching singing is that I can show people the potential they have within them.

## Czech Language is Full of Emotions

The voice is a really great instrument. One of the greatest differences in teaching here and in Switzerland is the language. I had to understand how Czech language behaves in the mouth, because it is quite different in every language. The most distinct difference is that Czech is formed in the throat, and I have to pay attention to it when teaching. And in my personal life, I had to focus on emotions; I had to learn how to express myself in the right context, because Czech is full of emotions! Apart from the language difference, I also had to deal with the different approach to life and responsibility. I like to have everything ready beforehand, but here in Moravia there's a more laidback approach. **We'll see, definitely, we'll do this!** And everything starts to get ready 2 weeks before the

event. In Switzerland, everything would be ready by that time. That was a culture shock for me, but I'm getting used to it.

## Freedom and Wine

Thanks to my boyfriend, I got together with the swing community and dance school **Swing Wings** right at the beginning of my life in Brno. Thanks to them I can teach jazz singing, I have students, the space, and good friends. Well and Moravia is something like **Swing Wings** but on a large scale. The people here have a really big heart. I believe that Czech people have a specific talent for music. When I listen to Moravian folk music, I also hear that beautiful soul and love. I feel more at home here than in Switzerland. I feel free. Living in Moravia for me means freedom, wine, music, friendship.

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