

Capturing Disney Parks presents **DISNEY ICON SPOTLIGHT**

Episode 53 | Gijs van Winkelhof from Gijs Music | September 16, 2020

In this series of Q&A's, Capturing Disney Parks introduces you to some of the biggest and most iconic Disney Parks fans sharing the magic on their social media, video platform, blog, vlog, podcast, or website. Questions by Niels van Eijkelenburg.

Q 01 | THE ICON

Please introduce yourself to our readers.

Hi everybody! My name is Gijs Van Winkelhof and I'm a pianist and composer from the Netherlands. I'm a graduate of the University of the Arts in Utrecht. Disneyland Paris fans might have seen me perform at Café Fantasia at the Disneyland Hotel.



Pictures provided by Gijs

Q 02 | THE PARKS

Which Disney Parks have you experienced, and which one do you consider your 'home' Park?

I've visited Disneyland, Disneyland Paris, Walt Disney World and Tokyo Disneyland. From all the resorts, I've visited Walt Disney World the most (as a tourist). Because of social media I met a lot of amazing people from the USA, so I love to meet up with them and go to the parks. I'm an annual passholder for several years. My home park is EPCOT. The park is very special to me. Disneyland Paris has a very special place in my heart too of course. I know both resorts very well.

Q 03 | THE PLATFORM(S)

Where can we find your Disney fan platforms?

www.youtube.com/gijspiano
www.twitter.com/gijsvwinkelhof
www.instagram.com/gijsmusic

Q 04 | THE FORMAT

Tell us something about the format of your online platform(s), how it all started, which Disney Parks you cover, and why you love to put such a lot of effort in those activities.

On my YouTube account I share a lot of my own piano arrangements and compositions. I love to play music from the Disney parks. For example, I made piano arrangements of the entire shows of 'Happily Ever After' and 'Wishes'. I also made two EPCOT piano medleys.

I also use Twitter a lot. I do piano live streams there every Sunday at 3:30 EST (22:30 Amsterdam time). I play song requests from the viewers.

Q 05 | THE LOVE

How and when did your love for Disney Parks start?

I remember seeing a commercial about Disneyland Paris on the VHS of The Little Mermaid. My dream was to go there. The footage they used for the commercial was from Walt Disney World by the way, haha! I was 8 years old when I first visited Disneyland Paris with my family. It made a huge impression on me. That's when I started to play the songs and themes from the parks on piano.

Q 06 | THE TRIPS

How many times/days a year do you visit Disney Parks (estimate)? And how many days are most of your trips?

When I perform at Disneyland Paris, I love to visit the parks during the day. Sometimes I perform there for 10 days in a row, sometimes 4. Before the COVID-19 situation started, I performed at the Disneyland Hotel almost every month. My trips to Walt Disney World are around 10 days. I go there two or three times a year.

Q 07 | THE FAVORITS

Please name your favorite Disney attractions, parades, or shows.

My favorites at Disneyland Paris are: Pirates of the Caribbean, Phantom Manor, Big Thunder Mountain. My favorite show: Disney Dreams.

My favorites at WDW are: Space Mountain, Rise of the Resistance, Haunted Mansion. But also attractions like: PeopleMover, Living with the Land, The Great Movie Ride (rip!). They're all wonderful! My favorite shows: Fantasmic and Illuminations: Reflections of Earth. My favorite parade: SpectroMagic.

Disneyland: Pirates of the Caribbean, Indiana Jones Adventure, Mr. Toad's Wild Ride. My favorite show: World of Color.

Tokyo Disneyland Resort: Pooh's Hunny Hunt, Sinbad's Storybook Voyage. Journey to the Center of the Earth was closed when I went. Bummer! But Tokyo DisneySea is so beautiful! I can recommend everybody to go. Parade: Electrical Parade Dream Lights!

Q 08 | THE MEMORY

What's your most memorable Disney Parks moment? Tell us all about it please!

As a pianist at Disneyland Paris I have experienced amazing things. Meeting people from all over the world, wedding proposals while I was playing Disney songs, playing duets with Disney characters like Mickey Mouse and Goofy.

I have very fond memories of Mickey's Very Merry Christmas Party at the Magic Kingdom last December. That was so much fun! I'm happy I got to experience it, especially since there are no Christmas parties this year. By the way.. the day before that I saw 'Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker' at the AMC movie theater at Disney Springs and right after that we went to Hoop-Dee-Do Musical Revue at Disney's Fort Wilderness... and who was sitting at the table next to us? George Lucas!

Q 09 | THE TIP

Do you have a tip or advise - about anything Disney Parks related - to share with our readers?

Check the crowds before booking a trip!

Q 10 | THE CHOICES

Make your choice! You have to choose one...

- | | | |
|---|----|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mickey | or | <input type="checkbox"/> Donald |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Characters | or | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Attractions |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Star Wars | or | <input type="checkbox"/> Marvel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parades | or | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nighttime spectaculars |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On-site hotel | or | <input type="checkbox"/> Off-site hotel |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Annual Pass | or | <input type="checkbox"/> Ticket |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Animation | or | <input type="checkbox"/> Live-action |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pins | or | <input type="checkbox"/> TsumTsums |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Early morning visits | or | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Evening visits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PhotoPass | or | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FastPass |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jack Sparrow | or | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Captain Hook |

Q 11 | THE QUESTION

Do you have a question for me?

Which three attractions from Disney parks around the world would you choose to bring to Disneyland Paris? And where would you build them?

Niels:

"Flight of Passage", which could go into the Walt Disney Studios Park expansion in a new land (maybe a full Pandora including a longer version of Na'vi River Journey) next to the new lake. "Mystic Manor", although I'm not sure where that would fit best. Not too close to "Phantom Manor". Theming wise maybe best in Adventureland or Fantasyland. And lastly "Rise of the Resistance", to become part of the upcoming Star Wars land in the Studios. Runner-ups: Journey to the Center of the Earth, Seven Dwarfs Mine Train, Mickey and Minnie's Runaway Railway.

THE END

I would like to thank Gijs for participating in this Q&A series. Hope you've enjoyed this episode. Until next time and have a magical day!



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