

Transcription of Podcast 309: Jayne Weiss

Monday, November 8, 2021

SPEAKERS

Bob Firing, Jayne Weiss

Note: This transcription was computer-generated and may contain typographical errors.

Bob Firing 00:10

Good afternoon Shadow Hills. Well, we have a lot of interesting residents here with a lot of interesting stories. And so, in a woman named Jane Weiss is here to talk about her father today, Jane, welcome to the podcast.

Jayne Weiss 00:25

Thank you very much. It's good to be here.

Bob Firing 00:26

So let's start with you. How long have you lived here? Where did you move from? And, you know, tell us a bit about yourself, what are you interested in?

Jayne Weiss 00:36

Well, we, my husband, and I moved here from LA. And in March of 2019. And we are very familiar with Palm Springs. I used to come here, every crew Easter vacation when I was growing up. And my family and we loved it here. And we wanted to buy a home. And LA was just crazy, the house sales were exorbitant. And so my niece said, you know, you want to go look in Palm Desert. And we came out here, we have a friend who's a real estate agent here, actually. And we came out on a weekend and we binged, we gave her a list of what we were looking for, the wishlist. And she didn't show us anything that wasn't on there. And the first house we saw was here. And it hit every point and even got us an extra walk in closet, which is a woman's favorite thing. And so we put an offer in and they accepted it right away.

Bob Firing 01:43

Excellent. Well, welcome to the neighbor.

Jayne Weiss 01:45

Thank you. We love it. Love it. Love it.

Bob Firing 01:47

And you have a rather famous father, tell us about it.

Jayne Weiss 01:51

Yes. My father was Sammy Weiss, or better known as Sammy "the drummer" Weiss. He was . . . well, I'll give you a little bio on him first, because he had an interesting youth. My father was from the Lower

East Side of New York. He was from a very poor family. And his father was a bootlegger. And unfortunately, his father died when he was very young, and he had five sisters and a brother that he had to help support. And one day he couldn't afford instruments or anything, so he actually made a set of drums out of rungs from a chair and trashcan tops, and made a little poor set of drums. And one day, in front of the building, the kids were all playing their instruments, and a neighbor came by and asked him if he could get a few friends together to play their daughter's wedding. So he did he went and he got himself a set of drums, and at 15 that started his career.

Jayne Weiss 03:04

And he started playing in the Catskill Mountains, and for weddings, dances, bar mitzvahs. And then, in New York, he played with many of the most prominent jazz musicians, such as, in the 30s or 40s, Louis Armstrong, Wingy Manone, Artie Shaw, Benny Goodman, Tommy Dorsey, Louie Armstrong, Paul Whiteman, Louis Prima. And then, because in 1945, my oldest brother was ill. And they told my family that because of his illness, he would probably wouldn't survive another winter in New York. So my father moved west to LA, California in 1945. And that is why Gene Krupa . . . my father was absolutely the first drummer with Benny Goodman, the first drummer with Tommy Dorsey and Artie Shaw. But because he wanted to move west and with his family, that's when Gene Krupa showed up, Buddy Rich, both musicians that are very famous today, so they moved west and then my dad had his own band and, any besides playing with all the prominent musicians, he had his own orchestra. And when he was in New York, he was on radio with the Jack Benny show. And the Jack Benny show used to use the band members as part of the cast. They used to make jokes about . . . Frankie Remley was the drunken guitar player. My father was bald, they used to make fun about his bald head, things like that. Then he was in a lot of the episodes. And then, so he was like a regular cast member. And then he was like I said he also had his own orchestra here, and . . .

Bob Firing 05:03

Well, I, I don't know much about musicians, but the one thing I do know is that they're on the road a lot,

Jayne Weiss 05:11

Right.

Bob Firing 05:11

Was he, you know, home a lot or was he mostly gone? And how did that affect you and your family?

Jayne Weiss 05:19

Well, because he didn't want to travel. That's why the other musicians came on board of the other bands. So he created his own orchestra. And he played like at the Hollywood Palladium, all different venues like conventions, weddings, all kinds of important parties. And then he did movies. He was actually have an interesting story. And he there was a movie called The Joker's Wild with Frank Sinatra, who we also worked with, and they were filming the movie in 1957. And I was six. And my father told Frank, that I was a big fan. At six years old, I knew all his records like, I know, I could pull them out from all the records and play them. The next day at 5:30 in the morning, Special Delivery came an autographed picture of him to me, because then we're filming in Hollywood.

Bob Firing 06:15

So the big question is, did you inherit his musical talent?

Jayne Weiss 06:21

Well, I can't. All my family are musically inclined. I had three brothers who were all musicians. One played trumpet, piano and drums. And my other brother Allen plays drums and sings. And then I had another brother that played saxophone, clarinet, piano, drums and sang. I played violin guitar, piano and sang. And my sister played piano and sang.

Bob Firing 06:47

So the answer is yes.

Jayne Weiss 06:49

And my mother...

Bob Firing 06:50

You could have your own band.

Jayne Weiss 06:52

No, my mother could scat like Ella Fitzgerald. If you know her music. My mother could actually scat like her.

Bob Firing 07:00

How many of your family performed professionally?

Jayne Weiss 07:04

My three brothers all have their own orchestra.

Bob Firing 07:06

And did you give lessons and stuff to pursue for your music?

Jayne Weiss 07:10

No, I . . . Oh, I went into different directions. I went into the actually I worked for TV Guide Magazine for 13 years as an editor and writer. And then I went into the cosmetic industry for 14 years. So I took a different direction.

Bob Firing 07:26

Okay. Well, thank you for coming in and telling us Did I miss anything?

Jayne Weiss 07:31

No, I . . . Oh, he was also a couple things I forgot. He was also in the movie, The Unsinkable Molly Brown and one of the orchestras in the movie. And in the movie Mary Poppins, there is an animated scene where there's a cartoon band animated band. And my dad invented a one-man band instrument called the boom bass. And if you Google it, you say, "Sammy's boom bass" and it'll come up. It's like a

Sun City Shadow Hills®

pogo stick. And it has cymbals at the top, a cow bell, a woodblock and a symbol, a tambourine, and it's a one man, you know, you hit it with the drumstick, and they used it in an ad, the animated scene and Mary Poppins where the animated band are playing, and you'll see it one of the characters actually playing a version of it. And you have I was wondering, are there a lot of musicians living in the community? Do you know?

Bob Firing 08:30

You know, I think there's 6000 people, there's probably, you know, half a dozen or so we've gotten . . . everyone here has a story, and they're all pretty interesting. Well, thank you for coming in.

Jayne Weiss 08:45

Thank you for having me.

Bob Firing 08:46

Okay. And Shadow Hills. Until next time, bye bye.