

We End Our 2020-2021 APSS Season With a Happy Birthday, Dean Martin

By Marilyn Lester

In the last of a season's worth of virtual programs, The American Popular Song Society went on hiatus with a full-out tribute to Dino Paul Crocetti, known to the world at large as Dean Martin—one of the most popular and enduring entertainers of his time. The Zoom celebration was hosted by Board member, Will Friedwald, master of clippage, with co-hosting by fellow Board member, Bill Boggs, TV personality, author and journalist and authority on "The Rat Pack." Rounding out the panel was one of Martin's eight children, Deana Martin—herself a singer and performer—later joined by her husband, film and music producer John Griffeth, and singer-dancer Michelle della Fave, one of Martin's Goldiggers.

Over a generous 2 hours and 45 minutes, the panel spoke about their experience of Martin, who, as Friedwald noted, would have turned 104 on June 7 (he was born in Ohio in 1917). Interspersed with conversation were photos and video clips of the man-of-the-hour, beginning with one from his weekly NBC comedy-variety series, "The Dean Martin Show," which ran from 1965 through 1974. There followed the image of the debonaire Martin in trademark tux singing "C'est Si Bon" (Henri Betti/André Homez; English lyric by Jerry Seelen) with the easy flair he unfailingly conveyed. In fact, he was nicknamed "The King of Cool."

As we came to know, over the course of the tribute, Martin was not only a singer, but an accomplished actor and comedian. Boggs strongly noted this

latter point, emphasizing that Martin possessed a very rare combination of talents, and that in his day he dominated



Dean Martin

television, night clubs and recordings. Friedwald added that a secret of Martin's was to open up an audience emotionally via laughter; that accomplished, they are



The Dingaling Sisters, Michelle della Fave bottom left

captured. In his early days, Martin was half of a comedy duo, Martin and Lewis, the latter being Jerry Lewis. The two had become friends when both were

performing at a New York City club. Their debut as a music-comedy team was in July 1946 at Atlantic City's Club Room. Exactly ten years later, in 1956, after a successful career as a double act, they split up, and not on good terms. Deana Martin recalled how her father was quite nervous about going out as a solo act. But his debut at the Copa Room in Las Vegas was a huge success. From those Lewis years, Friedwald showed a clip from 1955's "Colgate Comedy Hour." It featured the pair holding their own with the marvelous dancing artistry of The Four Step Brothers.

Naturally, because of its popularity and longevity, much of the tribute centered on "The Dean Martin Show," which featured the singing and dancing Goldiggers prominently. Della Fave was 19 when she was selected as one of that troupe. She quickly became a member of the breakout group, The Dingaling Sisters, who had their own numbers and performed with Martin on every episode of the program. Deana Martin shared that her father especially wanted to feature the girl troupe on his show, which was a good show business decision. Friedwald showed many clips of the Goldiggers as well as a segment of the show that featured the adult children of his showbiz pals, including Desi and Luci Arnaz, Heather MacRae, Frank Sinatra, Jr. and Deana with two of her siblings.

Friedwald also shared clips of the Music Room segment of the Martin



President's Message...

Linda Amiel Burns, President

Dear Members, Friends, Family and Fans,

Welcome to the 2021-2022 Season of the American Popular Song Society. I hope that you all had a fun and safe summer! We are very excited that our monthly Programs will be live at our new venue, the renowned cabaret Don't Tell Mama on Restaurant Row. As always, we will be meeting the 2nd Saturday of each month from October through June from Noon to 2:00PM. Members are welcome to come early from 11:30 on, and can relax in the piano bar area while we process check ins. We strongly encourage you to pay your membership in advance or have your check ready at the door. We will also be streaming the shows for those who are unable to attend in person. Sidney Myer, Booking Manager and Cabaret Icon, has welcomed APSS to his club, offering a wonderful stage, grand piano, great lighting and sound systems and a Tech Director who will surely enhance our shows. Since we are finished at 2:00PM, you can enjoy lunch in the neighborhood or maybe catch a Saturday matinee.

We are glad that the city has Covid mandates and procedures in place to protect us. At the door, we will be asking each person to show their vaccination card before entering; this is not optional. The audience will wear masks except when eating or drinking. Seating is limited at Don't Tell Mama and in the future we might ask people to make reservations if this becomes an issue.

Of course, we are asking everyone to renew their membership and bring friends who may wish to join. The Guest Fee for non-members is \$15. For those who cannot attend the live shows, we will also stream the shows thanks to Bernie Furshpan's Video Studio. The Zoom fee is \$10, but remains free to members. You are welcome to bring coffee, tea, danish etc. but please be sure to clean up afterward.

Our opening Program on Saturday, October 9th will be "A Tribute to Susannah McCorkle" the late jazz singer. The Program is being produced by our Newsletter Editor-In-Chief and Board Member Jerry Osterberg featuring a first rate cast of performers who knew and worked with Susannah. You can read about it in this issue and it is a Program not to be missed!

We want to welcome a new member to our fabulous Board of Directors, the esteemed Author, Historian, Producer, Documentarian, and all-around brilliant guy, Ken Bloom! His resume is too long to list here, so look him up on Google. Ken has a new book on Eubie Blake, so look for that program in the coming season.

To take the American Popular Song Society to the next level, we have filed to change our status from a non-profit 501C5 to a 501C3 to be able to do more fund raising and allow your contributions to be tax deductible. Covid hit us hard, so we are planning a GoFundMe Campaign as well as a star-studded Gala in 2022. The additional funds will help us with the increased rent, streaming costs, pay for our music directors and performers, and perhaps create a lecture series, documentaries, and films that will help us continue our mission of having future generations know about the extraordinary legacy of the songwriters and the music of the American Popular Song.

Looking forward to seeing you on October 9th at Don't Tell Mama!

Linda

Linda Amiel Burns, President
American Popular Song Society

MEETING LOCATION: starting October 9, 2021



(343 W. 46th St.)
12:00pm - 2:00pm

Come early to look thru Sheet Music & CD's & stuff, all FREE.



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Popular Song
Society*

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Dean Martin cont...

show, with Ken Lane at the piano, opining that he'd love to do an entire program of these two and their musical collaboration. Martin and Lane could be seen with tunes such as "Call Me Irresponsible" (Jimmy Van Heusen/Sammy Cahn), Jimmy Webb's "Wichita Lineman" and one of Martin's signature songs, "You're Nobody till Somebody Loves You" (Russ Morgan/Larry Stock/James Cavanaugh). Other clips from the show featured Martin in duets with famous guests of the day, including Ella Fitzgerald, Lena Horn, The Mills Brothers and Louis Armstrong.

Dean Martin's image was shaped in part by his association with the so-called Rat Pack—Frank Sinatra, Peter Lawford,

Sammy Davis, Jr. and Joey Bishop—friends who often performed together in film and in Las Vegas. Martin,



sophisticated, charming and urbane, was often holding a cigarette and a glass of "something," presumed to be alcohol. He acquired the reputation of being an alcoholic, about which Deana Martin

explained the truth with passion. It was pure shtick, she said, a gimmick borrowed from fellow comedian-actor-singer, Joe E. Lewis. In reality, Martin's use of alcohol was disciplined; he was not a carouser, but a family man. Della Fave added insight, addressing the ultra-masculine image Martin conveyed. She noted that he was remarkably tender.

For those who are too young to remember Dean Martin in real time, Friedwald, Boggs, Deana Martin and della Fave provided a delightful picture of the man. It was only fitting to play him out with "Dino" singing his signature song, "Everybody Loves Somebody" (Sam Coslow/Irving Taylor/Ken Lane). A toast all-around to Friedwald, Boggs and company. 🎵

TIN PAN ALLEY DAY 2021

*An OUTDOOR PUBLIC CONCERT of music from TIN PAN ALLEY
and THE GREAT AMERICAN SONGBOOK!*

Saturday, October 23rd, 12 noon-4 pm (rain date Sunday, Oct 24)

FLATIRON NORTH PLAZA, 23RD STREET at 5TH AVENUE

Join us for an outdoor public concert on TIN PAN ALLEY DAY and help us joyfully celebrate the official landmark designation of Tin Pan Alley on West 28th Street — the birthplace of American popular music! We're also fundraising for the new Tin Pan Alley American Popular Music Project to continue the great legacy of the "Alley." Your support and generous donations will help us further our mission to preserve America's unparalleled musical heritage.

The concert features stars of the American Popular Songbook, including special appearances by MARILYN MAYE, AARON LEE BATTLE, KLEA BLACKHURST, KEN BLOOM, JIM BROCHU, RICHARD CARLIN, ERIC COMSTOCK, DANNY BACHER, NATALIE DOUGLAS, WILLY FALK, DEWITT FLEMING JR., ERIC YVES GARCIA, ANITA GILLETTE, VINCE GIORDANO, LUKE HAWKINS, ROBERT LAMONT, GABRIELLE LEE, LARRY MARSHALL, SANDY MCGRAW, JILL O'HARA, JEANNINE OTIS, STEVE ROSS, BILLY STRITCH, TADA! YOUTH THEATER ENSEMBLE, TONY WAAG & THE ATDF ENSEMBLE and TERRY WALDO & THE GOTHAM CITY BAND

DONATIONS SUGGESTED

Presented by the Tin Pan Alley American Popular Music Project and the Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership

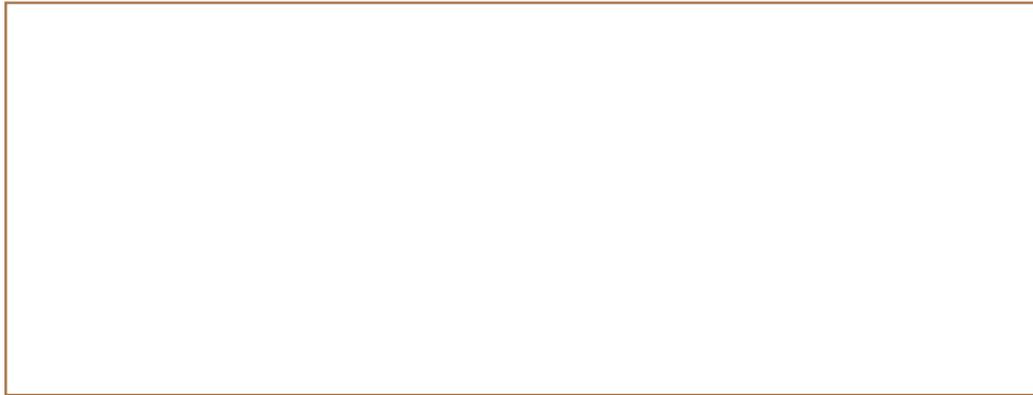
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APSS has gone Hybrid to accommodate the needs of those who cannot attend the live meeting scheduled at **Don't Tell Mama on October 9 at 12 pm**. You can be with us on ZOOM if you register in advance at this link:

<https://metropolitanzoom.ticketleap.com/apss-100921>

Once registered you will receive a ZOOM link from MetZoom so you can log into the event on Oct. 9 at 12 pm. It is free to members. There is a \$10 guest fee for non-members.



Tin Pan Alley Lives!

By Marilyn Lester

It's a good bet that pretty much all of us in the American Popular Song Society—formerly known as the Sheet Music Society—know the history of Tin

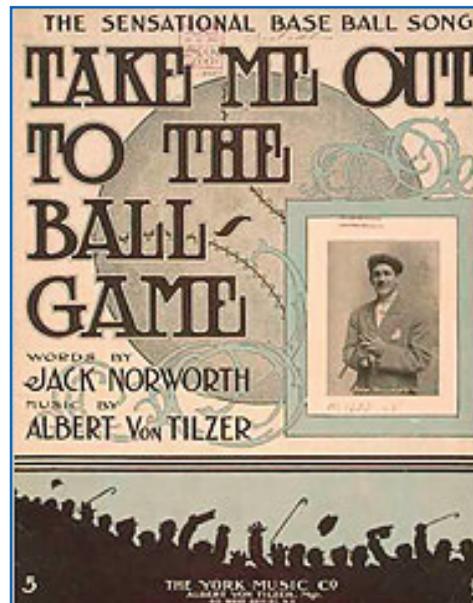


Pan Alley, that little bit of real estate on West 28th St. that birthed the American popular music movement. What you may not realize is that the several buildings that remain as a remnant of the original Alley were in danger of being torn down to make room for development. That almost-catastrophe has been averted by a concerted effort to landmark these precious buildings. Finally, after a persistent years-long attempt by historians, preservationists and friends, plus support from the Landmarks Preservation Commission and Speaker Corey Johnson, the City Council gave its final approval for landmarking the Tin Pan Alley buildings on April 23, 2020. The five designated buildings, between Broadway and Sixth Avenue, can now

continue to freely represent Tin Pan Alley's significant contributions to American culture and popular music.

The Tin Pan Alley American Popular Music Project (TPAAPMP), born of the landmarking effort, now considers its work just beginning. Tin Pan Alley's influence can't be overstated. It was in this small chunk of real estate that publishers and songwriters gathered and began to promote music, devising "song plugging" strategies that helped them sell sheet music to an eager buying public. The Alley's early days were central to a world in which radio was not widespread and there was a piano in practically every parlor in America.

TPAAPMP has a goal to promote appreciation for the historic beginning of American popular music and the modern



music business that developed on and around West 28th Street. By establishing

the story of Tin Pan Alley, sharing its history and growing an organization, the project hopes to: "build a dynamic community of American Popular Music enthusiasts and supporters in a place



where we can share the history of the people, events and songs of Tin Pan Alley to support music and cultural literacy and inspire current and future artists and musicians as well as the public at large."

To celebrate the landmarking of Tin Pan Alley, and to raise awareness of TPAAPMP, the organization is celebrating Tin Pan Alley Day on Saturday, October 23 (rain date, Sunday, October 24). The festivities begin at noon, and carry forth uninterrupted until 4 PM. See the separate information provided herein for details on the event.

You can learn more about Tin Pan Alley from an article written by yours truly in the May 2017 issue of the APSS newsletter.



It's membership time again. It might be a good idea....

Come to the program on October 9th prepared with your vaccination card AND your membership money both in hand when you arrive so you don't hold up people in line at the check points. Then also have your membership ready for when you reach the membership table before entering the room.

Ann Kittredge: OK, Let's See – Can We Do This, Still?

By Jerry Osterberg

Rhetorical or not, this extraordinary performer's question has been answered many times with a resounding *Yes!* Ann Kittredge has made an impressive start during the few years since she reentered the world of entertainment, including a MAC Award in 2018 for best cabaret debut. Those who have seen her perform might well wonder how such a seasoned entertainer could possibly be the new kid on the block.

They may not know that Kittredge had a world of performing on her resume long before her emergence in cabaret. Upon graduating from Carnegie Mellon, Kittredge moved to New York and married her college sweetheart. During the next two decades, encouraged by her husband, she performed mostly in regional legitimate theater, as well as Broadway and Off-Broadway, in musicals such as *Cabaret; I Do, I Do;* and *The Music Man*. When her first child started school, Kittredge made the tough decision to take a break from performing. She became an education advocate and volunteer, directing plays, musicals, and other events at her children's schools, introducing an afternoon acting workshop at a high school without a theater program and trained students how to audition for specialized arts programs in NYC. When her youngest child began high school, Kittredge came back to performing, finding that her life experience made returning to the stage all-the-more valuable.

Kittredge began the next chapter of her music career with *It's About Time* at the Metropolitan Room on March 17, 2017, accompanied by Music Director Wendy Cavett, and Ann McSweeney on bass.

The program included several songs from stalwarts of American musical theater: Jerry Herman, Ahrens & Flaherty, Maltby & Shire, Charles Strouse, Stephen Schwartz, Lin-Manuel Miranda, and a few lesser-known writers such as Steven Lutvak and Tom Toce.

Subsequently, Kittredge teamed with Alex Rybeck and produced a brilliant show, *Fancy Meeting You Here: An Evening of Ahrens & Flaherty*. Directed by Andrea

Marcovicci, the production featured "Make Them Hear You," "Human Heart," and "Back to Before" from *Ragtime*. It drew



rave reviews, garnering enough attention that Kittredge and Rybeck were invited to appear at the Beach Café. The pair quickly realized that the high energy and theatrical *Ahrens & Flaherty* musical would not work in the intimate space of the Beach Café. With only seven weeks to work with, compared to twelve months for Ahrens & Flaherty, Kittredge & Rybeck came up with a marvelous result, *Movie Nite*.

When it opened at The Beach Café, *Movie Nite* included many of the most beloved songs to ever come out of Hollywood, providing the audience with a marvelous opportunity to recall the exceptional films which were similarly



beloved. Among them were "You Made Me Love You" (*Broadway Melody of 1938*), "As Time Goes By" (*Casablanca*), "They're Either Too Young or Too Old" (*Thank Your Lucky Stars*), "We're in the Money" (*Gold Diggers of 1933*), "Stormy

Weather" (*Stormy Weather*) and "The Way We Were" (*The Way We Were*).

Besides continuing with her relatively recent career in cabaret, Kittredge is hoping to tour with Rybeck throughout the United States. She has not been idle during the self-imposed isolation of Covid; having created a critically acclaimed online program, *Virtual Shorts*, with Musical Director Christopher Denny and tech wonder Matt Berman. It was first in free live streaming, using a virtual music collaborating platform, *JamKazam*, which allowed Kittredge and guest artists to perform live and socially distant in their own homes. Among her guests were Sean Harkness, LaTanya Hall, Steve Ross and David Sabella.

Kittredge has taken her many years of experience as a music mentor in the school system and is paying it forward through the American Songbook Association. As a member of the Executive Board, she is using her knowledge to promote their mission to educate and promote the art of cabaret within the school community of under-privileged youth. Kittredge also finds time in her busy life to be a member of Soka Gakkai, International, an NGO of the United Nations that promotes world peace through recognizing and respecting the value of all living beings and believing in the power of heart-to-heart dialogue to build community world-wide.

Not about to stand still now that she's emerged from the voluntary confinement of Covid, Kittredge is about to begin work on her first album, *Reimagine*. It's a compilation of her favorite arrangements created in collaboration with Rybeck, Denny and Cavett during the past several years. Complementing those are songs in her repertoire which she believes connect to the current environment.

Ann Kittredge, a member of APSS, will present her first in-person concert, *Movie Nite*, in well over one year at Birdland on Sunday, October 10 at 8:30 PM. For reservations and information, go to

www.birdlandjazz.com



Lucille Ball: Happy 70th Birthday *I Love Lucy*

By Glen Charlow



All told, Ball would appear in 72 movies during her long career, including a string of second-tier films in the 1940s that garnered her the unofficial title, “The Queen of B Movies.” One of the earliest ones, a movie called “Dance, Girl, Dance,” introduced her to a handsome Cuban bandleader named Desi Arnaz. The two appeared together in Ball’s next film, “Too Many Girls,” and before the year was out, the pair fell madly in love and married.

For the careful, career-minded Ball, who had periodically been romantically linked to a series of older men, the Arnaz partnership turned heads. Fiery, young (he was just 23 when they met), with a bit of a ladies man reputation, Arnaz presented his new wife with something completely different. Friends and colleagues guessed the romance between the apparently mismatched entertainers wouldn’t last a year. But Ball seemed drawn to Arnaz’s spark, and while her husband’s attention sometimes did stray romantically from the marriage, the truth is during their 20 years together, Arnaz greatly supported Ball’s career hopes.

Still, as the late 1940s rolled around, Ball, who had dyed her hair red in 1942 at MGM’s urging, was looking at a stagnant stage life, unable to break into the kinds of starring roles she’d always dreamed about. As a result, Arnaz pushed his wife to try broadcasting and it wasn’t long before Ball landed a lead part in the radio comedy, *My Favorite Husband*. The program caught the attention of CBS executives who wanted her to recreate something like it on the small screen. Ball, however, insisted it include her real life husband, something the network clearly wasn’t interested in seeing happen. So, Lucille walked away, and with Desi put together an *I Love Lucy*-like vaudeville act and took it on the road. Success soon greeted the pair. So did a contract from CBS.

From the get-go, Ball and Arnaz knew exactly what they wanted. Their demands included the opportunity to create their new program in Hollywood rather than New York, where most TV was still being shot. But the biggest hurdle centered on the couple’s preference to shoot on film rather than the less expensive kinescope. When CBS told them it

would cost too much, Lucille and Desi agreed to take a pay cut. In return, they would retain full ownership rights to the program and run it under their newly formed production company, Desilu Productions.

On October 15, 1951, “I Love Lucy” made its debut and to the television viewing audience across the country it was immediately apparent this was a sitcom like no other. Bombastic and daring, the show, which co-starred Vivian Vance and William Frawley as Lucy and Desi’s two best friends, set the stage for a generation of family-related sitcoms to come. The program included story lines that dealt with marital issues, women in the workplace, and suburban living.

In perhaps one of the most memorable TV episodes ever, “I Love Lucy” touched on the theme of pregnancy, when Lucy gave birth to Little Ricky on January 19, 1953, the same day the real-life Lucy delivered her son Desi Jr. by caesarean. (The couple’s first child, Lucie, had arrived two years before.)



Loving
LUCY

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