

# Linda Amiel Burns / *American Popular Song Society*

Posted on August 29, 2019 by Alix Cohen in Woman Around Town

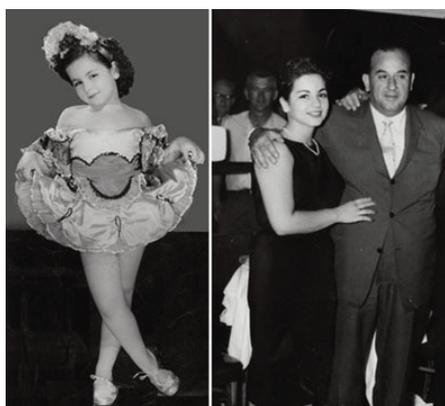


Members of The Board of Directors with Guest Sidney Myer: First Row- Will Friedwald, Joan Adams, Sidney Myer, Sandi Durell, Marilyn Lester, Elliott Ames. Second Row – President, Linda Amiel Burns – Glen Charlow, Tom Toce, Judy Stewart

To say she has a song in her heart vastly minimizes Linda Amiel Burns' occupation with/ devotion to popular tunes and songwriters. It seems, in fact, to have ruled her life. (Richard Rodgers/Lorenz Hart "With a Song in My Heart") Dual influences fostered her predilection.

The first was performing in such as Horn & Hardart Children's Hour and The Bonnie Maid Hour till the age of 12, followed by high school and college theater as well as further studies. The second was the in-

fluence of adored father Jack Amiel who owned two restaurants in The Brill Building, so famous for housing music publishers and studios, it was considered an incubator for hits.



Young Linda Amiel; Linda and her father, Jack Amiel

The Turf Restaurant, frequented by entertainers and songwriters, featured a "Songwriters Corner" papered with sheet music. "My father would say to me, 'Sammy Cahn, what did he write?' ("Three Coins in the Fountain," "Call Me Irresponsible") or point out Edgar Leslie ("Among My Souvenirs," "For Me and My Gal"). I got to learn who wrote what and to see a lot of Broadway."

Though Amiel Burns briefly sang, plans for a career in entertainment took a back-seat to marriage, running her husband's medical practice, then life as a single

mother. The divorcee turned her attention to a full time job in public relations. A few years later, circling back to performing, she discovered she was drawn to guiding others. "What I most enjoyed was putting the shows together, creating a theater piece in song with a beginning, a middle and an end."

Her own past anxieties inspired the divorcee to found the Singing Experience "to help people counter their fears, learning to sing with joy and confidence...I called a few friends, rented a piano and got sheet music from my father's house." (Studio space was subsequently hired.) There are, she tells me, 5,000 graduates to date.



The Danny Bacher Trio performing at a meeting. Jason Treberok-piano, Dean Johnson-bass, Danny Bacher at the microphone

For a while, Amiel Burns also ran restaurants, two of which were decorated with memorabilia from The



Left: Author Amy Asch "The Complete Lyrics of Alan Jay Lerner" Mark Nadler, KT Sullivan, Linda Amiel Burns.

Right: Jerry Osterberg, Lina Amiel Burns and Debi Whiting holding a Society Newsletter

Songwriter's Hall of Fame (still hoping for a permanent museum). She could give lessons in multi-tasking.

In search of sheet music for The Symphony Café, she heard about The New York Sheet Music Society. Established in 1980 by a group of dedicated collectors, it met once a month to swap music and stories. Amiel Burns began to attend gatherings. "I thought, these are my people." There was a formal speaker, entertainment, and a table with books and music. In the early 1990s, she was asked to be their first vice president. "I made it more show bizzy and less collection oriented." By 1998, she'd assumed the presidency.

About seven years ago, the organization changed its name to the more indicative American

Popular Song Society "songs of the past, present, and future." There are nine programs a year, the second Saturday each month from October. These feature an author presenting their relevant book, a lecture on an entertainer, intriguing panels, and/or actual performance, including Sandi Durell's annual Songwriter's Showcase. Other board members will be responsible for helming upcoming events.

Membership is a ridiculously low \$60 a year and includes an online newsletter currently edited by Jerry Osterberg. As a 501C4, membership is tax deductible. Guests and the public are welcome to events for \$15. For less than a movie, like minded people can attend a live performance.

The first meeting at the Society's new home in The Green Room 42-Yotel (570 10th Ave 4th fl) will be on October 12.

Its subject:

**THE INCREDIBLE BOSWELL SISTERS** *A Rousing Tribute to Those Amazing Close Har-*

*mmony Gals and Musical Pioneers — Katie Martucci & Her Swing Band celebrate the amazing Boswell Sisters — those three hip chicks from New Orleans who revolutionized singing with their rhythmic experimentation in harmony. The innovations of Martha, Connee, and Helvetia Boswell were a major influence on such vocalists as Ella Fitzgerald and the Andrew Sisters.*



DOORS OPEN AT 11 a.m.

At 11:30 a.m., the Meeting is called to order by our president. Then at 11:45 a.m., the Pre-Show, and at 12 p.m., the program begins.

Coming Up:

November 16, 2019 (Third Saturday) Ukelele Festival produced by Andrew Poretz

December 14, 2019 A Broadway Christmas produced by Mark William and Sandi Durell

All photos courtesy of American Popular Song Society.