

# Deborah Shulman – Bio

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Growing up in Los Angeles, Deborah Shulman had the great fortune to be nurtured by a family with a very deep passion for music. Her late parents lived in the back of their little music store at Carnegie Hall as newlyweds; her father, a great tenor, had aspirations of joining the Metropolitan Opera before WWII intervened in his plan. Considering the family tree includes vaudevillians, a Broadway actor, and music lovers of all stripes, it's easy to believe the Shulman family lore which says baby Deborah was singing before she was talking. When Deborah visited her grandfather, the renowned violin collector Nathan Posner, at his home in Beverly Hills, she would sit surrounded by the magnificent instruments and sing her heart out. He made her feel like the world's greatest singer, though he quietly hoped she would become a violinist. Today, Deborah Shulman is a successful singer and recording artist with an eclectic, international resume. The nurturing Deborah received paid off in a more unexpected way for the music world as well: as a vocal coach, Deborah is in demand by the dozens of professional and aspiring singers who come to her for guidance in overcoming large and small vocal challenges.

Deborah developed and refined her coaching skills beginning at age eleven under the deft tutelage of her father (Irving Shulman). At age thirteen, she became the youngest student ever accepted to The Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara, California where she studied opera with an esteemed faculty. In the idyllic Central Coast setting, with guitar virtuosos Pepe, Celin and Angel Romero in residence, Deborah grew enamored of the sound of classical guitar, and developed her attraction to song cycles while enjoying the camaraderie of great artists and students. She also unsuspectingly began to lay the foundation of her own success as a teacher based on her father's style where simple, joyful instruction supplants doubt and apprehension.

Deborah jumped into the marketplace while still a student, and sang and auditioned at every opportunity. She hopped from operatic soprano and recitalist to pop songstress, musical theater comedienne and back again. She loved Schubert and Judy Garland, Schumann and Barbra Streisand.

At 15, she attended the Musical Theater Workshop at UCLA with classmates Bonnie Franklin, Judy Kaye and John Rubinstein, and then returned to her roots soon after in the opera program at Cal State Northridge. At the age of 23, when Deborah met the successful actress and singer Ann Jillian at the Civic Light Opera Workshop at the Music Center, she had already been studying professionally for ten years. The two formed a musical partnership that seemed like just what the doctor ordered for a young woman weary from a decade of intense musical study: a way for Deborah to make a living in music, travel the world and blow off a lot of steam that had accumulated. The two singers played clubs for years in London, Sydney, Manila, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, and San Francisco under the name "Jillian and Shulman" and often opened for stars Johnny Ray, Robert Goulet and Carol Lawrence, delivering the wholesome brand of torch that was their specialty. When Jillian left to strike out on her own, Deborah quickly retooled the act as a solo, donned an army issue parka, and took off for the Aleutian Islands on a USO Tour.

Later, back in the lower forty eight, Deborah began to pursue more theatrical and musical roles, appearing in many productions with The Actors Alley in Los Angeles. Among her musical

theater roles, she portrayed Jellylorum in the second National Company of CATS at the Schubert Theater in Los Angeles. She found success in many other areas of the business as well, including as a librettist for four children's operas and co-producer of the critically acclaimed L.A. production and National Tour of All Night Strut. She began her coaching career with the help of her friend, voice coach Seth Riggs. Her reputation as a generous, skilled teacher became well known and her vocal clientele has grown to include Bette Midler, Linda Ronstadt, Jennifer Warnes; Deborah received a platinum album for her work with David Lee Roth on his recording SKYSCRAPER.

Several years back, Deborah went through a difficult period that was punctuated by divorce and the loss of her parents. After the unexpected end of her first marriage, she found comfort in listening to standards; the lyrics spoke to her and she was drawn by their truth and tenderness. For Deborah, it was the beginning of a journey forward by calling on the past for strength. In 2004 she teamed up with pianist Terry Trotter in a collaboration that produced two sophisticated, elegant recordings: "2 for the Road" and "My Heart's In The Wind." Trotter, the jazz pianist known for his interpretation of Sondheim scores, gently coaxed Deborah to use her considerable musical knowledge in a new way. They began to record piano and vocal tracks, and Deborah's mother and father were able to enjoy the beginning of her reinvention before they passed on within six months of each other. Deborah's liner notes described her inspiration for "2 for the Road":

"This is my story, my journey, a divorce I never thought would happen; grief, the kind I had only read about; a strength I never knew I had, and a new love, a new beginning and a new marriage."

On "My Heart's In The Wind," her second CD, Deborah continued her embrace of classic American Songbook, with selections like "A Sleepin' Bee" and "My One And Only Love." Yet she skillfully expanded her repertoire to include under sung jewels like Mandel's "The Shining Sea," Dave Frishberg's "You are There," and "Shiver Me Timbers" by Tom Waits.

Deborah carried on with her musical journey in 2012 with the release of the critically acclaimed "Lost In the Stars: The Music of Bernstein, Weill & Sondheim." Something of a family affair, the album features trombone master Larry Zalkind, Shulman's brother-in-law who is a principal trombone for the Utah Symphony and an in demand soloist and clinician; Shulman's sister, Utah Symphony violinist Roberta Zalkind; and her nephew, rising cellist Matthew Zalkind, who is currently making a name for himself performing with the Harlem String Quartet. The CD features fine arrangements by Terry Trotter, the superlative Los Angeles pianists Ted Howe and Jeff Colella, and the respected film composer Brad Warnaar.

Rob Lester comments on the *Talkin' Broadway* blog, "What stands out here is the way the evocatively sultry-voiced Deborah Shulman and the masterful musicians share the responsibilities and spotlight in telling the stories and setting moods...It's as if the parties here have created their own time zone, allowing the songs' many thoughts and details to be presented at the pace they choose."

“Get Your Kicks,” Deborah’s 2013 release, pays homage to legendary West Coast cool songwriter Bobby Troup. The project highlights her versatility in an exciting and unpredictable mix of tunes with inventive arrangements by pianist/producer Ted Howe. Deborah’s honest interpretations strike at the heart of every Troup lyric, beautifully juxtaposed with Howe’s adventuresome takes on well-known standards. The critics again took notice. According to Nicholas F. Mondello in *All About Jazz*, “Her rhythmic and melodically savvy approach, perfect diction and phrasing make Troup’s lines shine even brighter. And, with marvelously inventive arrangements and superb backing of pianist Ted Howe and his trio, the entire quartet frames and delivers the material impeccably.”