

Interview Subject: Judy Drucker, Concert impresario

Date Recorded: 4-21-12

Location: MDPL office, Art Deco Welcome Center

Date of Birth: 6-20-?

Judy Drucker was a very talented young pianist and singer living on Miami Beach, who became a performer on Broadway. She was the first person to bring world-class concert artists to Miami.

She and her parents came down when she was young but didn't like it and went back to New York for a few years. Her mother was a pianist and opera singer and she recognized Judy's talent when she was a young girl. She made sure Judy got good training as a pianist and vocalist.

They eventually moved back down to Miami Beach where her father built a home near Flamingo Park. One of her first musical gigs was singing Broadway tunes in the bandshell in Flamingo Park for the soldiers during WW2. She was in the Miami Beach High School glee club and sang for wounded soldiers at the Biltmore Hotel.

She went to Julliard to study opera but came back home to help her mother take care of her brother, who was mentally disabled.

She was engaged by Lou Walters to sing at the Latin Quarter, where she became good friends with Lou's daughter Barbara. They both had siblings who were mentally challenged.

Pinchas Zukerman was the first concert artist she engaged in 1969. She talks about the cultural milieu at the time. Miami had a small town atmosphere and people didn't think of engaging world stars at that time.

She talks about being mentored by Richard Tucker who encouraged her to engage big stars.

She talks about convincing Rabbi Leon Kronish at Temple Beth Shalom to use the temple's auditorium for performances because the acoustics were so good. The Great Artists Series was born there and it grew until they had to hold performances at the Jackie Gleason Theater.

She talks about how it's much more difficult now to organize concerts, find backing, because there is so much more going on.

At first, the Cuban population didn't come to her concerts because they were used to their own artists. But now they are on her boards and are among the biggest supporters, especially of the opera.