

Malibu Life

Shari Lewis and Lamb Chop celebrated in new book

Television pioneer and beloved entertainer is remembered by her Malibu daughter

By JUDY ABEL
Special to The Malibu Times

If you're a millennial or older, and especially if you're a baby boomer, you must surely remember Shari Lewis. The multi-talented entertainer, along with her famous sock puppet Lamb Chop, may have been your babysitter, friend, and comfort during her astounding groundbreaking television career.

The beloved ventriloquist and pioneering female TV personality starred in various children's programming from 1957 to 1999. Lewis and Lamb Chop sang, danced, entertained and educated their way into the hearts of children and their parents for more than four decades. Now this television icon is being celebrated in a new book, "Shari Lewis and Lamb Chop: The Team That Changed Children's Television," which is co-written by Shari's daughter, Mallory Lewis, and Nat Segaloff.

The book is part biography and celebration of Lewis' many talents and triumphs in the burgeoning broadcasting business. Of course, there weren't many women behind the scenes back in the 1950s, but Lewis' estimable skills in many realms helped her enter showbiz at an early age. At 13, she was already an accomplished performer, working as a magician, and a trained singer and dancer. She was groomed for showbiz by her parents. Her father Abraham "Doc" Hurwitz was dubbed the official magician of New York City by Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia during the Depression. Her



Mallory Lewis, daughter of the late Shari Lewis, continues to take her mother's famous sidekick, Lamb Chop, to perform around the world. Contributed Photo.

mother headed the music department in Bronx, New York, schools.

With focus and determination, the performer, who touched millions of lives with her gentle humor, launched her career. The puppeteer got one of her first breaks on the "Captain Kangaroo" show. Soon after, Lewis headlined her own show and made sure music was always tandem with her ventriloquism.

"Mom felt very strongly that music education is the foundation for a life of learning because it requires discipline, focus and hard

work," said Mallory Lewis, who would go on to describe not only her mother's talents, but hard work in shaping her intellectual property.

"My mom was an entrepreneurial woman before women were entrepreneurs," she said. "So many of the same problems exist today that existed when my mom was first starting. When my parents met, my mom was making 10 times what my father was making, and he had to sign for her to have a credit card. Women can now get their own credit cards, but the burden of child care,

the mental burden of running a home still falls to women. My mom fought very hard against that."

Lewis says the book is a wonderful way to get to know the "woman behind the curtain because she was equally interesting behind the curtain as she was on stage. She was a businesswoman, a mother, a wife, adventurer, a political activist."

"Mom lived her life fairly privately because there was no social media then and because she was focused on the work," Mallory Lewis explained. "People have a lot of

misconceptions of who Shari Lewis was."

On stage and on the small screen Shari Lewis was a formative figure in so many young lives. Her longevity in children's programming allowed her fans and then their children to also be exposed to her gentle and informative entertainment that Mallory Lewis says her mother coined with the word "edutainment."

Even today Mallory Lewis gets her mother's fan mail on a daily basis.

"My mother was very special to people,"

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MALIBU'S BEST SHOT



Westward Beach: July 26 with iPhone 12. Photo taken by, Eytan Ribner

To submit your community spotlight, send a high resolution (300 dpi) jpeg photo by email to editorial@malibutimes.com, along with a caption up to 85 words

Original childhood movies of Queen Elizabeth II discovered in private Malibu film collection



This collage of photos was made from film footage of Queen Elizabeth II as a child. Footage archived by Malibu filmmaker Leslie Schwarz.

Malibu filmmaker Leslie Schwarz discovered hours of footage using an archival scanner featuring future monarch, along with other treasures

By DEAN ROBINSON
Special to The Malibu Times

Leslie Schwarz has spent the last 14 years researching her private collection of original spy mission films. She has accumulated nearly 1,000 hours of rare and unseen films, and her collection has become a priceless library of films and stories

that bring into question a plethora of controversial, geopolitical, and entertaining moments in history.

Last year, Schwarz purchased one of the best archival 4K film scanners available today. This allowed her to uncover and preserve some amazing treasures, including Anheuser-Busch family movies, original car racing films from Bridgehampton, and childhood films of Queen Elizabeth. **CONTINUED ON PAGE B2**

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MALIBU SEEN

By Kim Devore, Entertainment Editor

It was one of Hollywood’s grandest and most glamorous nights of the year. The red carpet sizzled with sequins, chiffon, silk, and satin. Ensembles were slit up to here and plunged down to there with strapless confections everywhere. Skin was definitely in. But long was the way to go with floor length gowns galore.

Guests mingled at a posh cocktail party festooned with lush bouquets. One happy gala goer gushed “what’s a red carpet bash without a glass of champagne?”

Soon it was showtime, and just minutes away, this year’s appreciative winners would be announced.

As for the coveted Best Comedy Series, the competition was tight with “Abbott Elementary,” the HBO hit “Barry,” sarcastic funnyman Larry David’s longtime series “Curb your Enthusiasm,” the entertaining “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel,” and the haunting Steve Martin and Martin Short laugh-fest “Only Murders in the



Best Supporting Actress in a Drama Series went to Julia Garner for “Ozark.” This is Garner’s third Emmy for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Drama Series for the Netflix show, co-starring Jason Bateman and Laura Linney. Photo courtesy Emmy/Television Academy

Building.” Along with these contenders was an Anglophile’s dream come true in “Ted Lasso” and “What We Do in the Shadows.” But in the end, in a tough category, the winner was ... “Ted Lasso.”

Insiders said Jean Smart was a shoo-in for Best Lead Comedy Actress in “Hacks.” Although others included Rachel Brosnahan for “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel,” Quinta Brunson for “Abbott El-

ementary,” Kayley Cuoco in the high-flying “The Flight Attendant,” Elle Fanning in “The Great,” and Issa Rae in “Insecure.” But when it came down to it, the insiders proved right and the statuette went home with Smart.

In the Best Comedy Actor stakes, it was possible to vote for both Steve Martin or Martin Short for two acclaimed performances in “Only Murders in the Building,” with Jason Sudeikis in “Ted Lasso” and Bill Hader in “Barry” close behind. Others included Donald Glover in “Atlanta,” and Nicholas Hoult in “The Great.”

But when the votes were tallied the big win went to Sudeikis.

In the Best Drama department, “Succession” snatched the big trophy. “Succession” faced a mixed bag with “Yellowjackets,” “Stranger Things,” “Severance,” “Ozark,” “Better Call Saul,” as well as the quirky “Squid Game.”

Malibu’s Patricia Arquette garnered a nod for Best Supporting Actress in a Drama Series in “Severance.” Her competitors were Julia Garner for “Ozark,” Jung Ho-yeon for “Squid Game,” and Christina

Ricci in “Yellowjackets,” Rhea Seehorn in “Better Call Saul,” J. Smith-Cameron for “Succession,” and Sydney Sweeney in “Euphoria.” But at the end, Arquette lost out to Garner for “Ozark.”

Almost all critics predicted that Best Lead Actor In A Limited Series without a doubt was Michael Keaton in “Dopesick.” They did not even mention an upset, in their tough critics jargon; they just listed underdog as simply ... none. And they were right. Keaton held the trophy high and thanked his cast members.

As for Best Lead Actress in a Drama, the lineup consisted of Jodie Comer for “Killing Eve,” Laura Linney for “Ozark,” Melanie Lynskey for “Yellowjackets,” Sandra Oh for “Killing Eve,” perky Reese Witherspoon for “The Morning Show,” and Zendaya for “Euphoria.” In the end, the winner was Zendaya.

Lizzo’s “Watch Out for the Big Grrrls” broke “Ru Paul’s Drag Race” Emmy streak and Malibu’s Mark Burnett’s longtime hit “The Voice” in the Best Reality/Competition Series category.

But win or lose, it was an entertaining evening of spellbinding Hollywood glory.



PERSPECTIVE

By Burt Ross, Contributed Column

I’ll wait til I get older ...

The other day I was at the doctor’s office — something I do more frequently with each passing year. Across from where I was sitting in the waiting room were a middle-aged woman and her father. I know it was her father because she called him “Dad.”

The woman noticed my walking sticks, which I use more often as I mature (get older). She made some joke about whether I was going skiing since trekking sticks look a lot like ski poles. I hate when people do that, but I cannot stop them. Obviously, I am not about to go skiing at Cedars Sinai in the middle of August. I explained to her that I had had polio, and the sticks help my balance and my walking.

She turned to her father and said, “Dad, you might be able to benefit from them.” She seemed quite so-

licitous of him, and I immediately forgave this loving daughter for asking me about my trekking sticks. Her father looked at my sticks rather dismissively. I asked him if he would like to try using them, but all he said was, “I’ll wait til I get older.” So far, so good.

The daughter looked at me and explained, “My father is 100 years old.” He immediately interrupted her to add, “100 years and six months.” I didn’t know what to say, and those of you who know me know that I am rarely speechless. Finally, I looked at the two of them and told them exactly how I felt, “You are not 100. Why would you lie to a complete stranger.” The man corrected me, “100 and 6 months.”

I was then called into the doctor’s office. I immediately told the doctor there was some guy in the waiting room claiming to be 100 years old. “Yes, I have been treating him for well over 40 years,” the doctor said, and then he corrected me, “100 years and 6 months.”

PRIVATE MALIBU FILM COLLECTION OF QUEEN ELIZABETH II

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This collage of photos was made from film footage of Queen Elizabeth II as a child. Footage archived by Malibu filmmaker Leslie Schwarz.

Schwarz has scanned a couple of hours of Elizabeth films, which seem to have been shot over a period starting around 1929 and continuing through 1933. Scanned at 4K, the 90-year-old films and frame grabs look like they were shot yesterday.

What appears to be on this set of films:

The footage was shot long before Edward VIII abdicated the throne to George VI (as dramatized in the Oscar-winning “The King’s Speech”), at a time when Elizabeth was just a little girl and not even considered in line to be queen. These films show a great relationship between a semi-normal 20-something pre-Queen Mother and her precocious child Elizabeth.

It is as if someone just followed them around with a camera and filmed everything they did: birthdays, costume parties, beach vacations with the queen mother’s parents (Cecelia Bowes-Lyon and Claude Bowes-Lyon, 14th Earl of Strathmore), along with footage of friends like a young Winston Churchill.

There are pictures of a trip on the Royal Yacht Britannia to India to attend a Viceregal garden party for the recently placed Viceroy of India, Lord Willingdon (Delhi, 1932). At the Viceregal event, Queen Mary (Mary of Teck) was filmed having an argument with the Nizam of Hyderabad (the richest man in the world). India was in the midst of a Great Depression and less than a month before the party, Lord Willingdon had imprisoned Mahatma Gandhi for his Civil Disobedience Movement (as depicted in the movie “Gandhi”).

There are films of Elizabeth riding horses in Shimla at Wildflower Hall and a large military parade, exhibition, and horse show officiated by Queen Mary; attended by George VI.

Maharajah, Sir Hari Singh was the big trophy winner for his horses (Sir Hari Singh is the reason that Jammu and Kashmir is disputed to this day). The films end with three or four years of Elizabeth’s elaborate birthday and costume parties spanning between the ages of 3 and 7.

Leslie’s film collection backstory:

Schwarz’s obsession with collecting films started after the death of her great aunt. While the family was clearing out her aunt’s house, Leslie saved a cache of dusty old films that were destined for the dumpster. Hundreds of old films neatly stacked in fiber film boxes, metal cases, and wrapped in 60-year-old newspapers had sat hidden in a crawlspace forgotten for decades. The family rarely talked about her famous uncle’s films or details of how the films were thought to have been destroyed by a suspicious fire.

Initially, Schwarz tried to see the footage by hooking film reels to her painting easel and viewing individual frames using a magnifying glass and flashlight. Many cut fingers and headaches later, she bought an antique Moviscop film viewer. Through the Moviscop, she was

able to watch her footage come to life: a 1933 voodoo ritual in the jungles of Suriname, Princess Grace at her wedding, Bulgari craftsmen making jewelry earmarked for Elizabeth Taylor, the first footage ever shot of the Pope inside of the Vatican on Easter Sunday, a cold war suicide mission through India, the assassination of Iranian Prime Minister Haj Ali Razmara, the first moving footage of Venezuela’s Angel Falls, the first footage of Columbia’s Popayan Procession, and many others.

Schwarz’s collection of films is a time capsule of luminaries, religious icons, world leaders, and controversial geopolitical history, filmed just before a coup, invasion, genocide, or event that changed the country forever.

Leslie Schwarz:

Schwarz doesn’t fit the profile of a typical film nerd obsessed with collecting and saving old films.

Graduating from UCLA with a degree in economics and a passion for film; she went to work at Warner Brothers Studios for Peter Guber’s production company.

In her mid-20s, Schwarz’s career trajectory took a downturn when she was hit by drunk drivers in two separate car accidents. This triggered a series of life-threatening events culminating in a doctor telling her to go home and put her affairs in order.

Schwarz has survived massive head trauma, paralysis, mercury poisoning, Lyme disease, multiple sclerosis, and numerous life-threatening crises. She brought herself back through excruciating alternative medicine, spiritual practices, and equestrian therapy.

During the Iraq War, Leslie acted as liaison for Malibu’s adopted 101st Airborne “Gators”; wrote “Pony-ing-Up,” an ongoing column on equestrian therapy for The Equestrian News; taught handicapped horseback riding at Ronald McDonald Camp and SERT (Special Equestrian Riding Therapy); and served on the board of Malibu’s Trancas Riders and Ropers.

With a degree in economics and a Ph.D. in life, Schwarz is a courageous, compassionate, complex woman profoundly impacted by her personal struggles.

Whether through God, Djinn, Deity, spell, talisman, spirit, or submission, a series of inexplicable events has guided and driven Schwarz throughout this 14-year journey of discovery, as if otherworldly forces have made her story one with these films.

Malibu Times articles about Leslie and her projects:

Uncle Art was a Spy: pepperdine.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/PDNP01/id/29205/

Anne Frank Film: pepperdine.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/PDNP01/id/36085

Top stories of 2014 #9: malibutimes.com/article_925c9bda-8fbb-11e4-afad-c7436668495d

101st ‘Gators’: malibutimes.com/article_328662cc-16f6-5757-a317-32e7a962426a

SHARI LEWIS AND LAMB CHOP

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she said. “The stories are, ‘I had a difficult childhood and your mother was my one safe place.’ Or, ‘The whole family sat down and watched your mom on TV. It was one of the happy times every week when she came on.’ Or, ‘I had a crush on your mom.’ Good children’s performers remind us of when we felt safe and when the world was a simpler place.”

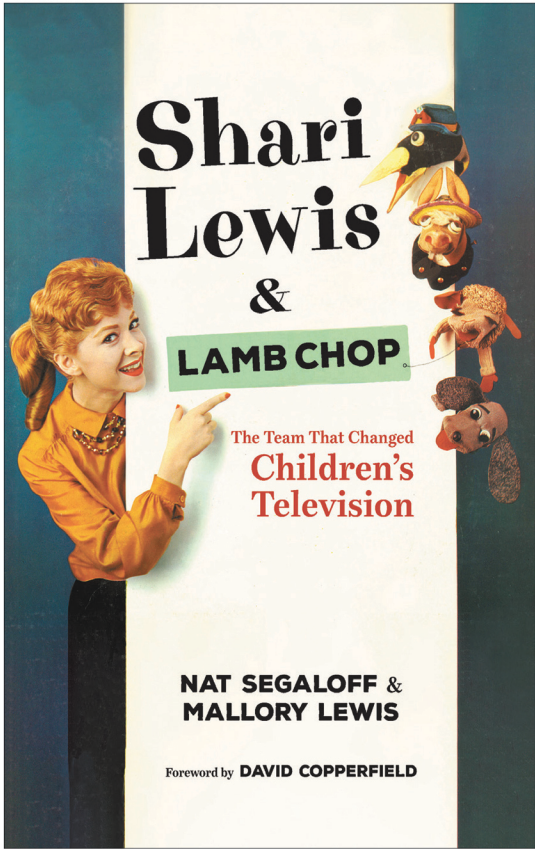
Mallory Lewis was working as head writer and producer on “Lamb Chop’s Play-Along” and “Charlie Horse Music Pizza” shows when the beloved entertainer died in 1998. It was shortly after that her look-a-like daughter decided to not step into her mother’s shoes; rather, she “stepped into her sock.”

“I couldn’t imagine a world where Lamb Chop was dead too,” Mallory Lewis said. “I loved being Lamb Chop’s sister. I wanted my son to have that joy and he did.”

Mallory Lewis and Lamb Chop now travel the world continuing the act. A Shari Lewis and Lamb Chop documentary is coming out in the spring directed by Lisa D’Apolito, who’s known for her documentary on comedian Gilda Radner.

Mallory Lewis can be found at mallorylewisandambchop.com and TikTok@yourfavlambchop.

“Shari Lewis and Lamb Chop” will be available Oct. 18, wherever books are sold.



“Shari Lewis and Lamb Chop: The Team That Changed Children’s Television,” a book co-written by Shari’s daughter, Mallory Lewis, and Nat Segaloff, will be available on Oct. 18. Contributed Photo.



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