

Annie Kozuch Bio

For many people, choosing a career path can be a process of serendipity, circumstance and haphazard coincidence; but for the multi-talented Annie Kozuch, music, theater and performance called to her from an early age and no other option was ever seriously considered.

Born in Elizabeth, New Jersey, Annie moved to Mexico City at the age of six months where she grew up in a bi-lingual environment, speaking both English and Spanish. Music was always a major part of the home atmosphere; but it was her mother's original cast recordings of Broadway musicals that had the most profound effect upon her. Singing along with the great Broadway vocalists, Annie's early music lessons came from that exposure, learning to sing under the influences of Barbara Cook and Julie Andrews. As her horizons broadened into the dramatic arts, Meryl Streep and Mexican actress Silvia Pinal also had a major impact on the talented young lady, as did the opportunity to attend Spanish-language theatrical events by the world-renowned producer Dino De Laurentiis.

Already participating in school plays and community theater, Annie knew in high school that this was what she wanted to do with her life. Cementing it all in place was the powerful experience of being cast in Oscar-winning director John Schlesinger's highly acclaimed *The Falcon and the Snowman* during her senior year in high school.

In 1984, Annie left Mexico to attend Mills College in Oakland, California. She graduated in 1988 with degrees in Drama and Psychology, but ever true to her goals, she studied psychology to get a deeper insight into the characters she would portray. She spent her junior year in London, studying at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (during which time Dame Judy Dench became another key influence). Here she had her full epiphany when an instructor asked the class what they would do as a second life choice...and she could not think of anything else. After graduation, she spent a highly impactful summer at American Conservatory Theater, studying with the highly acclaimed actress, playwright and MacArthur Genius Award recipient, Anna Deavere Smith

Annie remained in San Francisco until 1990 and then moved to the Upper West Side of Manhattan, where she has lived ever since. Shortly upon her arrival in New York City, Annie had the opportunity to embark on a one year excursion performing on cruise ships, sailing all over the world. Rather than seeing it as an interruption in her career pursuits, she viewed it as an excellent opportunity to keep repeat audiences entertained and uplifted while honing her performance skills in song and theater. Upon her return to New York in 1992, Annie pursued an extremely active career in theater, film, television/radio and singing.

She performed in New York City and Regional theaters, including the Denver Center for the Performing Arts, The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Stageplays, The John Houseman Theater, The Harold Clurman Theater, and the Director's Company. She also appeared in a number of independent films and on television in various capacities from featured performances to host to spokesperson. She continued to pursue her craft, including studies with the great Co-founder and Artistic Director of The American Place Theater, Wynn Handman,

During these years, another important development occurred as Annie found herself drawn deeper and deeper into the realm of musical expression. By the year 2000, she found herself more heavily involved in non-theatrical musical performances in a full gamut of circumstances from intimate cabaret to symphonic concerts. Her experiences in the latter featured her performing Broadway classics with the New Haven and Tokyo Symphony Orchestras. A two-year stint in 2007/8 with the Nolan Gasser Quartet (now the San Francisco Jazz Quartet) playing at private events from coast to coast - including such places as Wynn Resorts in Vegas, Calistoga Ranch, The Colony Hotel in Palm Beach and for the M Financial Group in San Francisco - laid the groundwork for more intimate performances. All of this eventually led to her longtime collaboration with the outstanding pianist Frank Ponzio, who remains her musical director to this day.

With Frank's musical support and direction, Annie developed her first one-woman show, *Diva's Lament* which premiered at the Beechman Theater in 2008. Here Annie began to tell her own story in bilingual song, blending musical theater with the *Great American Songbook*, Jazz standards and Mexican boleros. That led to the release of her critically-acclaimed debut CD *Here With You* in 2010, which was adapted into a second show under the same title, opening at the Metropolitan Room. Annie and Frank have continued to tour and perform and her third show – and second CD – *Mostly Jobim* premiered at Feinstein's in 2012, with the CD release following in early 2013. Focusing almost entirely on the superb compositions of the immortal Brazilian composer, Antonio Carlos "Tom" Jobim, the CD has been garnering great reviews and Annie and Frank are already preparing her next show and recording.

Although the stage and the interactions with other actors in the presence of a receptive audience will always be a part of her life, Annie's musical activities are dominating her current performing life. Plans for more concerts and touring with *Mostly Jobim* are in the works following the release of the new CD.

Among her other professional activities, Annie is quite busy in the world of on camera commercials and voice-over recordings in both English and Spanish. She's also heavily active in charity work. This includes participating in marathons and triathlons to raise money for charities in which she believes, including the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society and the late Paul Newman's *Team Hole in the Wall*, dedicated to healing of seriously ill children and assisting their families. She has also participated in Catholic Big Brothers for Boys and Girls, with an 8-year mentorship of her Dominican kid "brother" being one of her proudest achievements.

For more information about this extraordinary woman, including a full resume of her credits and credentials, visit www.anniekozuch.com