

# David Marzetti

1956

RADIO PERSONALITY, SINGER, EMCEE

WRITTEN BY DAVID MARZETTI

Growing up in Canton, Ohio, I was always drawn to music. At a young age, while all my friends were listening to the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, I spent my time listening to Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin. To this day, when people ask how I learned to sing, my answer is always, “The School of Frank Sinatra.” He literally taught me to sing. Even in grade school, I loved his songs and the way he sang. Kind of unusual for a kid who was seven or eight years old, but I knew what I liked and, well, it was Frank.



Loving music actually prompted my interest in radio broadcasting while I was in high school. I began my “career at the microphone” reading the morning announcements on the school’s PA system every morning during the homeroom period. It wasn’t just the announcements: I made it into a little music show. The school gave me an extra 30 minutes in the mornings to play some music *before* I had to start reading the announcements. Kids actually came to school early, or at least on time, just to hear my show. That made me feel like a real DJ!

I was hooked on the idea of making radio a lifelong career, and upon graduation I enrolled in the WIXY School of Broadcasting in Cleveland, Ohio. This was such a great school because the teachers and instructors were people who were actually working at radio stations in Cleveland, so they knew what was important for us to learn; and we had the utmost respect for them because they were radio people who

had actually "made it" in the business. A few of us were in awe of some of the DJ's. They were like stars to us.

After graduation from broadcast school I moved up quickly in market size from stations in Canton, then Akron, then Cleveland. It was kind of mind blowing for me to be working at the very same radio station in Cleveland that one of my broadcast heroes worked at when I was listening to him on the radio while I was still in high school! His name was Dude Walker, and he worked for the big Top 40 station in Cleveland, which was WGCL 98 FM. Well, in 1979 I went to work for that very same station, doing a show from the same studio that Dude worked in. I couldn't believe it!

I was then promoted to bigger and better opportunities. In the 1980s I worked for a 50,000-watt station in Charleston, South Carolina, and then moved on to a very popular Top 40 station in Boston, Massachusetts, that was located in the historic Copley Plaza Hotel. But in the late 1980s I was lured to the Monterey Peninsula. How? By television. I was watching the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am, and I just couldn't get over the striking beauty of the area that I was seeing from the overhead blimp shots. I turned and looked out my apartment window in Boston, and there was only ice and snow everywhere. And, it was like 20 degrees. I thought, you know, I *could* just pick up and move there! I mean, why not?

I moved to the Monterey Peninsula in 1989, even though I had never been there before and knew no one. It was the only time I ever bought a one-way ticket. After landing in San Francisco, I took a Greyhound bus to Monterey and got off at the stop next to Fisherman's Wharf. Not wanting to jump right back into the radio world, I decided to find out what it would be like to work in the restaurant industry as a waiter. It was almost tourist season. I could make cash tips, and most probably get fed.

I walked down the Wharf for the very first time in my life and had a fish and chips

lunch at Gilbert's Red Snapper restaurant. I asked my server where all the Italians were working, and she said, "Rappa's at the end of the Wharf." I went there and applied for a job as a server and was hired by Mike Scanlon. Now I could eat. One September afternoon, on the way to work my shift, I was walking through the Custom House Plaza with my friend Anthony Balestreri, who worked at Rappa's with me, and there was a huge Italian festival going on. I asked Anthony what it was, and he said, "The Festa Santa Rosalia." We stopped for a minute and looked all around at the food booths, the wine booths, listened to the live music on the stage and saw the crowd of people enjoying themselves. I turned to Anthony and said, "*Cugino* (cousin), I am going to be part of this." Anthony laughed and said, "What? *Come farai?*" which meant "How will you?"

While working at Rappa's, I began singing locally and took several leading roles in musical plays at the Wharf Theater, owned by local legend Angelo DiGiralomo. I sang lead roles in *My Fair Lady* and *HMS Pinafore*, to name a few. Angelo was a kind professional and a good friend as well. I was struggling a bit in a situation whereby my lease at the motel where I was staying was ending, and the apartment I was moving into was not ready. So, I had a gap of two to three weeks where I didn't know where I was going to live. Angelo found out about my problem and told me to just stay at the theater. There was a small room in back with a cot and a shower, and he gave me my own key to come and go as I pleased. What a saint! During the day I worked at Rappa's, and at night I sang and lived at the theater, falling asleep listening to the sounds of the bay, seagulls and sea lions. What a great life!

Around this same time I got the itch to return to the airwaves, so I walked into the radio station that was in the back of the American Tin Cannery Factory Outlets in Pacific Grove and met with the owner, Roger Pasquier, who hired me on the spot. I was now the program director and morning DJ at popular station KOCN 105 FM. I stayed there for the next 12 years.

I was still singing and performing in the area and was a vocalist for St. Angela's Catholic Church in Pacific Grove when someone from the church approached me about singing at the Festa Santa Rosalia. I jumped at the opportunity and performed at the Festa for the very first time in 1993. In 1994 they realized that I was a radio personality and asked me to return not only as a singer but also as emcee of the event. I've been the official emcee for the Festa Italia Santa Rosalia ever since.



**Performing at the Santa Rosalia with Mike Marotta.**



**Performing at the Santa Rosalia with Anthony Lane.**

In 1995 my friend Ron Reiser invited me to play golf at Del Monte Golf Course, and he brought along a guy by the name of Mike Marotta, Jr. History was made that day. Mike and I became fast friends, playing golf, running bocce ball tournaments, performing music together at hundreds of events each year--including the Festa Italia--and enjoying lots of wine. Mike was even best man when I married Terri, the love of my life. And, who played at the reception? Well, the Mike Marotta, Jr., band, of course!



**With best friend Mike Marotta.**



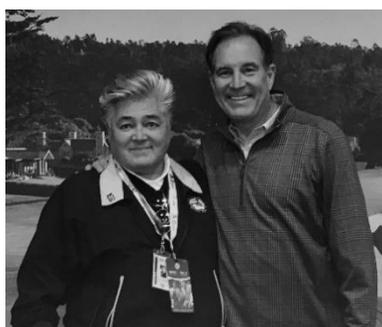
**Honeymoon in Venice, Italy.**

Terri and I honeymooned in Italy. After checking into our five-star hotel next to the Ponte di Rialto in Venice, we went out for a late-night dinner. As we strolled along the Grand Canal, guess what? I fell right into the water! Terri was screaming, and I was laughing so hard I almost drowned. I quickly threw my watch and money to her and tried to climb out,

but the sides of the walls were so caked with sludge that I couldn't get a firm hold. Along came a gondola full of laughing tourists; the gondolier told me (in Italian) to swim down to the next set of steps where I could climb out. I returned to our fancy five-star hotel looking--and smelling--like the Creature from the Black Lagoon. Terri and I laughed about our memorable honeymoon event all night.

In 2002 I developed the Shagbag Show, which airs via remote broadcast every Saturday at 9 a.m. from the Del Monte Golf Course on 1460 AM and 101 FM KION. The show celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2022, and through the years we've aired well over 1,000 shows and have featured over 4,000 guests from all walks of life--celebrities, athletes, business owners, performers, restaurateurs, hoteliers, writers, wine makers, doctors, bankers, politicians, wiseguys, etc. We've had them all on the show. The main thing I wanted to do was keep it interesting for the listener. And for me, too! I mean, I have to sit there and listen to them, too,

which is why I always feature four or five guests each week. They each get about ten minutes on the show, and then we're moving on to the next guest. During the first 15 years of the show, local radioman Sam Salerno was my co-host, but then he had to leave the show for medical reasons. Restaurateurs Rich Pèpe and Kevin Phillips now share the co-host duties. Friend Jim Nantz of CBS Sports is the voice that introduces the show each week.



**With good friend Jim Nantz of CBS Sports at the AT&T Pro-Am at Pebble Beach.**

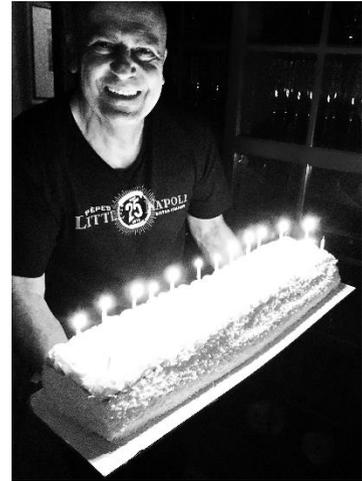


**SHAGBAG Radio Show 1460AM and 101FM KION broadcasting LIVE from the Del Monte Golf Course for over 20 years!**

Speaking of Rich Pèpe, “Pèp” and I have become very close friends over the years, and he hosts my birthday party each year at his Little Napoli Restaurant in Carmel, California. This is such a highlight for me every October! Terri and I are able to invite about 22 of our closest friends to help celebrate with us in the very private upstairs dining room at Little Napoli, and Pèp really puts the spread out for us. Marone! (Damn!) Talk about *abbondanza*! What abundance! Pèp says we’ll eat like we’re going to the electric chair. HA! And, we do! But like they say, the problem with Italian food is three or four days later, you’re hungry again! We eat lots of Italian food, we drink lots of Italian wine and we sing lots of Italian songs, thanks to my best pal, Mikey Marotta, who always brings his accordion. What a night! It’s so Italian, like right out of a movie.



**Scene from one of David's Birthday parties at Little Napoli.**



**Chef Pèpe with the bigga birthday cake!**

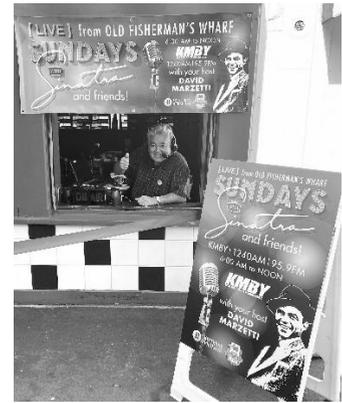
Besides the Shagbag Show, I started hosting a radio show called "Sundays with Sinatra...and Friends." The show airs every Sunday from 6 am to noon on KMBY 1240 AM and 95.9 FM. It's also heard in the Central Valley of California on 100.7 and 102.3 FM KKDJ/Fresno and of course online worldwide. The show features Ol' Blue Eyes and some of his musical friends like Dean Martin, Sammy Davis, Jr., Jerry Vale, Nat "King" Cole, Ella Fitzgerald, Steve Lawrence and Eydie Gorme, plus more. The last two hours of the program are broadcast live from Table 17 at Old Fisherman's Grotto Restaurant on Fisherman's Wharf in Monterey. It's so much fun to set up the gear every Sunday and broadcast from the Grotto. Being down there in the early hours, you get to see all the action unfolding. First the workers, and then the wave of tourists and visitors stream down the Wharf, and it really starts to come alive. Many stop by the show and chat a bit, or just stand outside the window and stare. That can be a little creepy sometimes, but you get used to it. The best thing is being back at Fisherman's Wharf, where I started out all those years ago when I moved here. I love it. Owner Chris Shake is a very close friend and was instrumental in making this happen. My longtime friend and legendary comedian Tom Dreesen, who was the opening act for Frank Sinatra for 14 years, introduces the show each week.



**Comedian and close friend Tom Dreesen broadcasting together from the AT&T Pro Am at Pebble Beach. Tom was Frank Sinatra's opening act for 14 years.**



**Sundays with Sinatra poster.**



**Sundays with Sinatra LIVE from the Grotto on Fisherman's Wharf on KMBY.**

Over the years in Monterey I've received recognition and awards that I am very proud of. I'm a three-time winner of the prestigious Media Person of the Year Award given by the PGA of Northern California. (Kind of coming full circle there, since watching a Pebble Beach golf tournament on TV sparked my interest in coming to the area.) In 2014 I was saluted by the Italian Heritage Society of the Monterey Peninsula as one of its annual honorees, and I'm a three-time (third time's the charm once again!) winner of the *Monterey Herald's* Readers Choice Awards as Best Radio/TV Personality. The Monterey Paisano Club bestowed on me the title of Man of the Year, and I was the very first person recognized with the Carmel Chamber of Commerce's Community Champion Award." I'm an avid golfer and have carded two "aces." (holes in one)

**Congressman Jimmy Panetta and Captain Rich Wiley USN after I received the Paisano of the Year award.**



In addition to being a member of the Paisano Club and a board member of the Italian Heritage Society, I'm a Disciple of Escoffier International and a lifetime member of the CHP 11-99 Foundation. Every year I emcee dozens of local events, including the Festa Italia, La Merienda (Monterey's birthday party), the Fisherman's Wharf birthday, the Festa Italia Santa Rosalia Queen's Coronation Ball and the annual awards dinner for the Italian Heritage Society. I'm also the vocalist with the International Trio, which is headed by Mike Marotta, Jr. Congressman Jimmy Panetta calls me "the Voice of Monterey."



**Celebrity Chefs at La Merienda (Monterey's birthday celebration): Owner of Little Napoli, Rich Pèpe; Me (emcee); former Secretary of State, Leon Panetta; Owners of Cannery Row Company, Ted Balestreri and partner Bert Cutino.**

Best of all, I live in Monterey with my lovely wife, Terri, and our two dogs.



**ITALIAN HERITAGE SOCIETY HONOREE 2014**



**Mike Marotta, Me, Erasmo Aiello and Dave Dally at a gig in Carmel at Basil Restaurant.**



**Making announcements at the US Open Golf Tournament.**



**With Clint Eastwood and Sam Salerno.**



**Interviewing friend & actor, Andy Garcia.**



**Marty Wolf, Me, Mike Marotta and Craig Ling ready to play golf at the exclusive Cypress Point Club.**



**Winemaker Jack Galante, Rich Pèpe and Congressman Jimmy Panetta at one of my birthday parties at Little Napoli in Carmel.**



**With entertainer Anthony Lane at the Festa Italia Queen's Coronation Ball.**



**Backstage at the Festa Italia with Singer Pasquale Esposito and Musician Mike Marotta.**



**Broadcasting LIVE from the Pro Shop at Pebble Beach during the AT&T Pro-Am. L-R: Oakland A's Coach Mike Aldrete, Me, Chef Rich Pèpe and Pebble Beach Head Pro Eric Lippert.**