

Two-Part Harmony

San Antonio CPA Hits the High Notes as CFO and Half the Family Band

By Anne McDonald Davis

The tenor taking the stage with wife, Kathy, at Bending Branch Winery in Comfort, Texas, also happens to be the chief financial officer (CFO) of a San Antonio software company – because let's face it, nothing says “managerial accounting” quite like The Beatles.

Steve Feinstein chuckles: “I find my work at Conceptual MindWorks quite creative. It fits what I tell my kids, ‘If you don't enjoy what you do at work, find something else to do. If you don't enjoy your job, it will affect your entire life.’”

So how exactly did a Brooklyn-born certified public accountant end up in south Texas helping to support a software company ... and playing cover gigs in his spare time?

“You know, when I was nine, my mother told me I'd probably grow up to be an accountant,” Feinstein muses. “Kind of makes me mad that she was right. I really don't remember ever wanting to be a fireman or anything. But even though our parents hadn't gone to college, somehow all the kids understood that we were expected to go. My brother is an MBA and a software engineer and my sister is an occupational therapist, so I guess whatever my parents did worked.”

After starting as a math major at Brandeis University, ultimately, Feinstein would receive his BSBA in accounting from Babson College, well known in the Northeast as a leading entrepreneurial college, a bit of foreshadowing for what was to come once he and his wife grew weary of the Boston-area weather and lack of affordable housing in the early-1980s.

It started with a vacation to Puerto Vallarta and a side trip to San Antonio on the way back. “We visited Kathy's aunt, who happened to be a Realtor. We found out how much easier it was to find, and afford, a house in San Antonio.”

Although neither Steve nor Kathy had a job when they left Boston, Steve quickly found a position. That's when he discovered he'd landed in quite a different culture. At his last job performance review in Boston, he'd been told he was “not aggressive enough.” At his first review in San Antonio, he was told he was “too aggressive.”

By the early 1990s, Steve was promoted to director of quality control; all financial statements passed through his hands. By the mid-1990s, he had added a master's certificate in governmental accounting to his professional arsenal, which in turn led to work with government contractors for the firm, which led him to Conceptual MindWorks, then starting out as a governmental contractor.

“I realized by that time that I wanted to try something new, something outside public accounting,” he admits. “Our company was pretty small in the beginning, but evolved into an electronic health record software company and grew. It's exciting – something different every day, all the time.”

Fein Tuned (that's the name of the band) evolved more serendipitously. Basically two pretty good singers/guitar players went out to dinner one



Guitar player and singer Steve Feinstein, CPA-San Antonio, CGMA, performs at various venues and private parties.



night with their wives, who both happened to be singers, and the band at the restaurant turned out to be, well, not so good.

Steve recalls: “My friend and I looked at each other and said, ‘Hey, we're better than that!’ Kathy, an extrovert, went over to the manager and got us our first gig. The other couple has since retired from the band, but Kathy and I still perform at various venues and private parties, eight to 12 a month!”

Of his life and musical partner, Feinstein observes: “What the music does is give us a common purpose. My wife is really smart and has interesting ideas. Last year, she came up with the idea to do a two-hour Beatles concert and sold the idea to a winery. Voted best actress in San Antonio 20 years ago, this allows her to go out there again and perform. She has a headset mic and she walks around talking to the audience as she performs. She has no fear in front of people.”

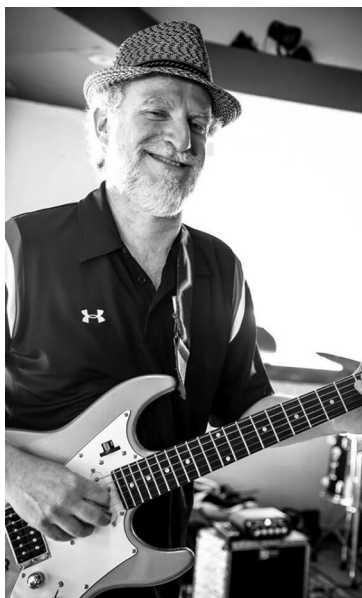
In the midst of all that, the couple managed to have twin girls who are 32 now. Bethany is director of events at Rooster Teeth, a media and entertainment company in Austin. Steve says: “She flies all over the world – Australia for 18 days next. She also has an online show ... and people recognize her everywhere she goes!”

“Our daughter, Hillary Romero, and her husband, Marco are Realtors and investors here in San Antonio, with about 20

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properties. Their daughter – our granddaughter, Elia – is 18 months old. We spend as much time as we can with her.”

Recently, Fein Tuned was one of a handful of bands selected to perform with the Youth Orchestra of San Antonio at their annual theme concert on March 12 at the Tobin Center. “This year, the theme is the Eagles and is titled ‘Hotel California.’ At more than 1,000 people, it will be the biggest audience we’ve ever performed for. We auditioned with ‘Desperado,’

because we had the voices for it and since the original recording is very heavily orchestrated, we hoped they were going to include it in the concert.”

Some of the smallest audiences the Feinsteins play for are at retirement homes. “We perform songs from their era and they sing along! Stuff from the ’30s, ’40s and ’50s. People often remember their lives through music. ‘Best of My Love’ – my wife remembers dancing to that at her high school prom.”

What are some lyrics meaningful to him?

“We’ve never performed it ... but ‘Guitar Man’ by Bread,” he replies.

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