

# MOVIE SPIEL

by Bonnie Strongin



Bonnie Strongin

## AKA Doc Pomus

*You can dance every dance with the guy  
Who gives you the eye, let him hold you tight  
You can smile every smile for the man  
Who held your hand 'neath the pale moonlight*

You might have thought that Jerome Felder (1925-1991), aka Doc Pomus, had too many strikes against him to make much of his life. After all, polio had struck him when he was just six years old, and he was sentenced to a life of crippling disability, never far from his crutches or wheelchair.

Born to Jewish immigrants in Brooklyn, NY, his childhood photos always pictured him leaning up against a wall or holding on to a fence. He wanted to look like the other guys.

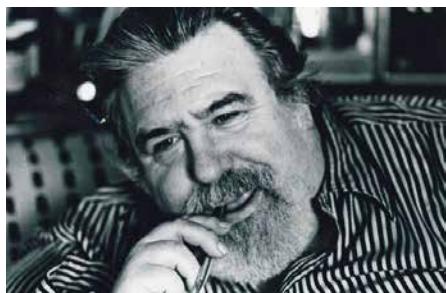
At the age of 15, he happened to hear Big Joe Turner's recording of *Piney Brown Blues*. "It changed my life," he said, and he found himself hooked on the blues. Changing his name from Jerry Felder to Doc Pomus so his mother wouldn't see his name on a club marquee, he cut about 40 sides on the old 78 RPM records before he switched to songwriting.

*But don't forget who's taking you home  
And in whose arms you're gonna be,  
So, darlin', save the last dance for me.*

The movie is homage to this early rock and roll pioneer of the 1950s and 60s. Through the wee hours of the night in his hotel lobby, he fed, he mentored, he supported, he guided; he listened to anyone and everyone he thought he could help — personally or professionally. It was said of him: "If the music industry had a heart, it would be Doc Pomus."

Perhaps because the film was conceived and co-produced by his daughter, Sharyn Felder, it becomes so personal. Using home photos and videos, archival footage, interviews and readings from his personal journals, we learn about the man and his life, his love and his pain as he physically deteriorated from post-polio syndrome.

*Baby, don't you know I love you so?  
Can't you feel it when we touch?  
I will never, never let you go  
I love you, oh, so much*



Jerome Felder, aka Doc Pomus

With collaborator Mort Schuman, their songs hit the charts, second only to songwriters Leiber and Stoller. Doc wrote over a thousand songs. He had to. "To be a successful songwriter, you have to write songs... It's some kind of terrible force, sometimes it's out of control. You have to keep writing."

Among his most remembered songs are: *Can't Get Used to Losing You* (Andy Williams); *This Magic Moment* (The Drifters); *A Teenager in Love* (Dion and the Belmonts); *Suspicion* (Elvis Presley); *Up on the Roof* (The Drifters).

John Lennon came to meet him; Elvis called to thank him for a song.

*You can dance, go and carry on  
Till the night is gone and it's time to go  
If he asks, if you're all alone  
Can he take you home, you must tell him  
no.*

A key figure in the history and development of rock and roll, Pomus was admitted to the Songwriters Hall of Fame and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. He was the first non-African-American recipient of the Rhythm and Blues Foundation Pioneer Award.

Always one to put his life into his lyrics, he wrote *Save the Last Dance For Me* after he was unable to dance with his bride, actress Willi Burke, at their wedding.

Legendary music pioneer Doc Pomus died of lung cancer in 1991 at the age of 65.

*'Cause don't forget who's taking you home  
And in whose arms you're gonna be  
So, darlin', save the last dance for me.*

AKA Doc Pomus, 2012 documentary  
Peter Miller & Will Hechter, directors  
Available on DVD and Netflix

## LASTING LEGACIES

Even in the fever-pitched pace of the world today, a traditional gift to the Savannah Jewish Federation continues to be a sure means of providing for the continuity of the Jewish community. Many people recognize this with their generosity to the Federation, year-after-year, knowing that the money will be used for community programs and support for other agencies that keep Jewish life thriving and Jewish lives surviving.

Herta and Warner Danziger knew first-hand the significance of a strong Jewish community. The young couple was born in Germany and was living there in 1938 when the call came for Warner to report to the local Gestapo headquarters. Herta was terrified she might never see her husband again.

Warner's father had papers that would allow the family to enter the United States, but they all worried that they may have waited too long to leave Germany. Luckily, the Gestapo agent processing Warner was an old friend of his who stamped his travel papers and they were able to escape. They sailed for New York and a year after their arrival in the U.S. they moved to Savannah.

As the Savannah Jewish Federation (formerly the Savannah Jewish Council) became an important part of the success of the Jewish community, the Danzigers were supporters. Warner died in 1978 at the age of 75; Herta was 93 when she died in 2004. A collection of Herta's papers is on file at the Savannah Jewish Archives.

Two years before her death, Herta

established the *Herta and Warner Danziger Family Fund* at the Jewish Community Foundation of Savannah "for the purpose of supporting the annual campaign [of the Savannah Jewish Federation] as a lasting legacy from Herta and Warner Danziger."

Every year, thanks to Herta's generosity and foresight, a gift is made to the Federation's Annual Campaign in the names of Herta and Warner Danziger. Every year, their names appear on the Honor Roll of donors. Herta recognized the ongoing value and importance of a unified source of



This is a picture of a German kindergarten class from Herta Danziger's materials at the Savannah Jewish Archives. Presumably she is the child in the front row marked with an "x."

funding for the community. But perhaps more significantly for the Danzigers, she knew the great beauty of being able to leave an everlasting heritage in their names.

## Create a Fund

A designated fund can benefit a specific purpose dear to your family or the community at large. Funds can be created and activated now or established with a bequest or other financial instrument. To discuss establishing a Lasting Legacy for your family with a fund at the Jewish Community Foundation of Savannah, contact Adam Solender at (912) 355-8111 or adam@savj.org.



ISRAEL BOND\$

## Israel Bonds Enjoys Second Billion Dollar Year in U.S.

Israel Bonds announced that in 2014, for the second straight year, U.S. sales surpassed \$1 billion.

Demonstrating the importance of the contributions of individual investors, the Development Corporation for Israel pointed out that 84% of the total sales were investments of \$25,000 and under, and 54% of total sales were \$1,000 or less.

Israel Bonds displayed its strategic value to Israel during Operation Protective Edge, rapidly mobilizing funds for Israel's economy.

Izzy Tapoohi, Israel Bonds President & CEO said: "Today's milestone shows that last year's record sales were not an outlier, but an attainable goal the organization will target each year."



**You  
might  
say  
we're  
always  
on call.**

Whether it's a single mother who lost her job, a Jewish child who wants to attend Jewish overnight camp or a hot meal cooked for seniors. At home, in Israel and across the globe, the Savannah Jewish Federation is there.

We foster Jewish life in countless other ways as well. Helping young adults to reconnect to their Jewish identity through Young Jewish Savannah. Fostering a child's Jewish journey beginning with PJ Library then support for preschool and supplemental Jewish education, BBYO, and Hillel and Birthright Israel. Being a resource for those in need through Jewish Family Services.

**Your gift to the Savannah Jewish Federation enables us to accomplish all this and more. You're an integral part of all we do. Give to the Annual Campaign today. Visit us at [savj.org](http://savj.org) or call (912) 355-8111.**



*Savannah Jewish Federation*

The **Strength** of a People  
The **Power** of a Community