



SoundBites Podcast Transcript

Episode: Huey Lewis

Dave Fabry: This is Starkey Sound Bites. I'm your host, Dave Fabry, Starkey's chief innovation officer. Our guest today is musical legend Huey Lewis. In recent years, Huey's musical career has been disrupted by his hearing loss and severe tinnitus resulting from Meniere's disease, and we'll talk a little bit about that. He joins us today to discuss his hearing loss journey and also, I have to say, Huey, you really provide inspiration for a lot of people as to how they can be optimistic despite the obstacles that are provided by hearing and balance challenges.

Your voice is one of my favorite of all time and I have to say, we first had the opportunity to meet in 2001. You won't remember this but I was president of the American Academy of Audiology at that time. You came down to San Diego and spoke at our annual convention about some of the early challenges you had with hearing loss. At that time, you'd had some difficulties with hearing in one ear that then has progressed to both ears since then, but thank you for joining us today and I really appreciate your taking the time to talk a little bit about this.

Huey Lewis: Good to be with you, man. Good to be with you.

Dave Fabry: You're looking good and like I said, it's a pleasure to hear your voice in song again.

Huey Lewis: I can sing to myself but I can't hear music to sing to it. I can't find pitch because music, as you know, is much more difficult to listen to than speech. Speech occurs in a narrow frequency, usually. Music, even one note, occurs in all frequencies with harmonics, overtones and everything. It just comes at me from too many frequencies. It just confuses my hearing and I can't find pitch.

Dave Fabry: I would imagine you have perfect pitch, right? Before all of the distortion-

Huey Lewis: No. I have relative pitch. I have good relative pitch but not perfect. Perfect pitch is somebody who can just sing an A note. Relative pitch is if you sing an A note, I can sing you a D note.

Dave Fabry: Once you get the note on the piano, or on a guitar string or some other areas, then you can reference it, but not pull it out of...

Huey Lewis: I can sing to myself in tune. I can sing in tune by myself. If you play a guitar chord for me, I can't hear it. It sounds like cacophony for me. It goes shhhhh

Dave Fabry: In particular, with all of the distortion that's been added over the years.

Huey Lewis: The distortion, the resonance or whatever. You guys call it resonance, I call it distortion. Same thing.



Dave Fabry: You grew up ... You were born in New York City and you divided your youth between the East Coast and the West Coast, right?

Huey Lewis: Yeah, pretty much. I was born in New York City but I moved to California when I was five years old because the sandboxes weren't very good. My family moved to California, so I was raised in Marin County, northern California. At 13 years old, I went away to prep school in New Jersey for four years.

Dave Fabry: Got it.

Huey Lewis: I was educated there for four years, then I went to Cornell for five minutes over a two-year period and mostly played music. Then, came back to San Francisco to join a band.

Dave Fabry: When did you first get the music bug? Where was it? How old were you when you started performing and playing?

Huey Lewis: Well, when I started performing ... My dad was a musician. My dad was a doctor, but his hobby was music and he played piano and drums. He was an excellent drummer. I had guitar lessons as a kid a little bit, but my parents got divorced and my mother rented out a room to a boarder named Billy Roberts, who was a folk singer. He wrote "Hey Joe."

Dave Fabry: Wow.

Huey Lewis: He played harmonica with one of those braces, and he had a zillion harmonicas. He gave me a bunch of his old harmonicas, so I started playing harmonica. Then, I played for a little bit, fooled around, and I graduated from high school a year young. I graduated 16 years old because I'd skipped 2nd grade, and my father ... I was accepted to Cornell and was planning to go but my father insisted that I take a year off and bum around Europe before I went to college. I got myself to Europe and hitchhiked all throughout North Africa, Europe and Scandinavia, all the time playing harmonica. When I came back to the States, I had taken a year leave of absence, so I went back to Cornell and just pretty much joined bands, played music at Cornell, then dropped out and went to California.

Dave Fabry: Well, you mentioned that your dad was a drummer and I'm also a percussionist. One of the things that's been interesting to come out of the literature in the last five years or so is that musical training at any point in your life, turns out that it helps you when you're using hearing aids. Just the preparation from actually playing an instrument, understanding tonality, understanding the rhythm ... it helps you with your speech understanding in noise and, interestingly, some of the work that I proudly point to is that Nina Kraus, a researcher in our field, maintains that drummers have the highest IQs of all musicians.

Huey Lewis: Really?

Dave Fabry: It's just some of the work, I guess. I like to say I have great [00:07:30] temporal processing but lousy spectral processing. You don't want to hear me sing but the



rhythm, apparently, helps with tonality for speech and for speech understanding and noise.

Huey Lewis: So much for that bad joke which is "You know what they call people that hang around musicians?"

Dave Fabry: ... Drummers.

Huey Lewis: Yeah.

Dave Fabry: There's a whole host of them. I do also ... I wanted to point out that one of my prized possessions, and this is an audio podcast but you gave this to me in 2001 when you came and I keep it proudly on my shelf. I think you're not given ... For all of the accolades you've received, a Grammy Award and Academy Award nominations, but your harmonica playing really isn't given the due, I think, given that I've heard you play many times harmonica, and you rock it, man. That does give you a little bit of the temporal processing because harmonica really is an extension of a percussion instrument with the temporal part of it but, as well, you can take it much further with your musical acumen.

Huey Lewis: Well, you're sweet to say that. I used to be a serious harmonica player then, when I started my own band and sang all my own songs, now, I had a great band with a bunch of my pals and so many good musicians in my band, you only get one solo per song. I have to give it to the guitar player or the horn players. As we went on in my career, I played less and less harmonica, but I still love the harmonica. A little harmonica in my band goes a long way.

Dave Fabry: I understand, but I enjoy the harmonica. Maybe, again, going back to that percussion background, but the other thing-

Huey Lewis: The other thing about harmonica ... there is no more expressive instrument than a diatonic harmonica. One can argue a saxophone and maybe a pedal steel because you can bend and so on but because of the nature of a diatonic harmonica, the fact that you can bend the notes and get such expressive tone out of it ... The other thing, of course, is the sound comes from your cavity, your body cavity, so that nobody sounds the same.

Dave Fabry: You mentioned the horn. One of the things with Huey Lewis and the News as well is I think people forget how you had a full horn section and I think you've mentioned in previous interviews that you guys were inspired by Tower of Power. "Still A Young Man" was one of my favorite tunes by theirs, but I think you guys had an excellent horn and sax section in addition to the vocals and the traditional rock and roll music members, too.

Huey Lewis: I've always loved soul music. I pretty much grew up on that. Me and my band were slightly younger than the psychedelic generation, if you will. So we had to find something that was our own, and that turned out to be soul music. In Oakland, there's a



soul music station called KDIA, which is the one and only sister station for WDIA in Memphis. In some cases, soul music records by, say, the Rance Allen Group or somebody like that, only got added to two stations in America. That would be WDIA and KDIA.

We were just faithful KDIA listeners. In our little college bands and stuff, we were playing James Brown songs with pedal steel guitar and stuff. That was always a part of what we do. Then, when we had some success, we hired the Tower of Power horns to play on a record, then we took them on the road with us for two years and fell in love with the horn section. Then, when we made another record of original material, Johnny played all the saxes and we hired a trumpet player, Marvin McFadden, to play trumpet, and we hired Johnnie Bamont to play baritone. Then, we put our own little horn section together and we toured with them for years.

Dave Fabry: Oh, man. I can just imagine what the music scene was like when you were in the Bay Area at that time, then touring with fellow Bay Area members Tower of Power and then how you combined that, then toured. Like I said, I've had the pleasure to hear you perform solo and with Huey Lewis and the News over the years, and you've brought a lot of joy to a lot of people, including ramping up to that in 2001 when you came to, then, the American Academy of Audiology conference and you talked a little bit about the fact that even in 2001, you had some challenges with regards to hearing and balance. Can you talk a little bit about that?

Huey Lewis: Sure. Suddenly, I lost the hearing in my right ear probably '83, I'm guessing, something like that. It was probably 1983. Then, I had a vertigo episode shortly thereafter. Then, I went to see my ENT guy and he said, "Get used to it," which was like "What?" He said, "This happens. We don't know what it is but it just happens sometimes. You only need one ear." I said, "What? I'm a musician." He says "Hey, Jimi Hendrix had one ear, Brian Wilson had one ear. I've got one ear and I'm in a barber shop quartet." I said, "Really?" He said, "Yeah."

I existed on my left ear. My right ear went out in '83 so, for 30 years almost, then suddenly, January 27th, 2018, before a gig, my left ear went out. It was just horrible. I tried to play the show, I couldn't hear anything. It was awful. I went immediately to House Ear Institute. I had steroid shots in my ear. I had a long 28-day program of prednisone. They tried steroids. That didn't work. They sent me to an immunologist who had me in all kinds of different Canadian drugs and that didn't work. Then, I got a second opinion from Stanford Ear and he said, "Meniere's." Then, I went to Mayo Clinic, and he said, "Meniere's." He said, "It isn't auto-immune. I know it isn't." I said, "Why?" He says "Because auto-immune, both ears go at the same time, and people who have auto-immune also exhibit other characteristics of auto-immune, like Lupus, and you don't have anything. You have classic Meniere's." I said, "Great. Now that I know what I've got, what do I do about it?" He says "We don't know."

Dave Fabry: ... Especially related to trying to address issues related to auto-immune hearing loss and Meniere's which, as you mentioned, are often misdiagnosed or confused because



there's no genetic test that could isolate exactly what it is that's causing it. Then, the further thing, like you just said: "Okay, now I know what I've got. Now what do I do?" We just came out of Protect Your Hearing Month a while ago and one of the issues, I guess, or questions that I had for you: after you lost the hearing in your right ear initially, were you really careful about what exposure when you were performing that the left ear was getting?

Huey Lewis: Sort of

Dave Fabry: Or not so much?

Huey Lewis: ... Probably not as much as I should've been but I've always had ... As a kid, I had ear aches a lot. Every flu season, I would get ear aches and my dad, who was a radiologist by profession ... I remember him telling me because I played baseball. He said, "You've got a great arm but you've got lousy eustachian tubes," because I would get ear aches. That probably scarred the Eustachian tubes a little bit. Plus, agreed, loud music isn't great for 40 years and I'm no spring chicken so maybe those three things are what Meniere's ...

Dr. Steven Rauch, who's probably the godfather of all of these guys, in a way ... he has 300 Meniere's patients a year. The day I talked to him, he had six in his office that day. He says "I can cure Meniere's 90% of the time." I said, "Really?" He says "Yeah." I said, "What is it?" He says "Well, three things. One is regular schedule. You get up at roughly the same time, eat at the same time, do everything at kind of the same time. Regular schedule. Two is overall good health. I want good cholesterol numbers and that kind of stuff, blood pressure, et cetera," which I have, "and exercise," which I do. "Number three is low salt. Not no salt, but low salt, and I want the salt distributed evenly over the day." He says "That will cure Meniere's." He says "The vertigo." He says "The hearing loss, we know nothing about," and I said, "So this is what you've got at Harvard Medical School? This is what you've got? Low salt, regular exercise and a regular schedule?"

Dave Fabry: I can see where you could even try to do the second and third one but a regular schedule when you're flying all over the place, and we've talked a little bit about the fact in the past that you've noticed that, when you disrupt your regular schedule by jet lag, air travel or whatever, that you've noticed that it has some impact on your hearing in particular now.

Huey Lewis: Interestingly, I just got back from Europe where, needless to say, my schedule was interrupted. I was jet lagged and so on. I had these mild vertigo bouts. Not full-blown vertigo attacks where I get nauseous and have to lay down but just dizziness. I probably had five of those but interestingly, my hearing gets incrementally better when I have vertigo attacks. Go figure. Now, I'm back home in Montana and I haven't had any vertigo but my hearing has maintained a little bit better than terrible. I judge it one to 10, it's four right now.

Dave Fabry: It's a four, so it's not great but it's not as bad as it was when you were on your European adventure. That's, I think, one of the most challenging issues from an audiologist's



perspective in working with patients who have Meniere's disease, where there is a strong hearing component is that it fluctuates. There are good days, bad days and days in-between. Really, trying to program devices ... Let's segue that a little bit into when was it the first time that you started wearing a hearing aid or hearing aids?

Huey Lewis: Well, I was contacted by Starkey. It was either 2018 or 2019. Then, I was fitted with my first hearing aids. It was a little bit of an adjustment period but you've got to realize that I was in a place where I couldn't hear, so now, suddenly, I can hear. Yeah, it takes adjustment, it sounds different, but I depend on my hearing aids. Without my hearing aids, I'm virtually deaf.

Dave Fabry: Yeah. I mean, you just have to adapt. You mentioned in January of 2018 when you ... I think you were in Dallas for an event, and that's when you first noticed that left ear really dropped out.

Huey Lewis: I was bedridden. I was so depressed, I couldn't sing and I thought, "Oh my God, this is the end of the world." I was so depressed, I stayed in bed for months, almost. My kids finally got me going again but, at a certain point, what are you going to do? You've got to move on.

Dave Fabry: ... Yeah, you've got to get up and get out, but I'm glad that you're doing well with amplification now, despite this fluctuation in hearing loss that you have and-

Huey Lewis: The only thing I miss, honestly, is music. Not only do I miss playing and singing music, but I can't even enjoy music. When I'm home and I'm cooking, I always have great music going. I'm first of all a fan of music, so that part is gone for me but I have to remind myself there's a lot of people out there who are a lot worse off than I am, so ...

Dave Fabry: ... And I wouldn't be so quick to say it's gone. We're going to continue to work on those areas. It won't sound like it did with normal hearing but one of the challenges, as you said, with music is it's a lot more sophisticated and a lot harder. The nuance of it is a lot more than with speech. With speech, it's a goal to understand the speech, either in quiet or noisy environments. With music, you have so much more of the frequency range, as you mentioned, and also the dynamics of sound. Then, in your case, because of the Meniere's, you have additional distortion that is added. Really, there's not a lot that can be done to reduce or eliminate that distortion except keeping the level lower in amplitude so that you don't overload the ear, as is frequently the case with Meniere's. We're not going to give up on that, though.

Huey Lewis: ... Level is the devil, that's for sure. Dr. Steven Rauch, when I told him my whole story, he said to me, "Well, I suspect because your right ear is actually ... Even though you don't have much hearing in your right ear, we call it serviceable because you still have some in your right ear." He says "I suspect that your left ear will find a level like your right ear that's crappy but it'll be a level." He says "With hearing aids, you'll be able to exist and do almost everything you could do before. The only trouble is you're a musician. The only thing you're really going to lose is music." He's right. That's exactly

what's happened to me. He told me that three years ago and that's exactly what's happened.

Dave Fabry: Well, in my clinical career, musicians have been some of the most rewarding but also some of the more challenging patients because they know what they want to hear, yet with damage that occurs, the sensory damage that occurs with Meniere's disease, we can't get that clarity that you remember from your passion. My understanding is that since January 2018, you haven't performed again-

Huey Lewis: I have not.

Dave Fabry: ... in public, right?

Huey Lewis: Originally, my left ear was fluctuating quite dramatically from six to two. When I was a six, I actually assembled my rhythm section to see if we could play a quiet unplugged with brushes and, in fact, I could hear pitch and we had a nice little rehearsal. I thought, "Oh, maybe there's some hope," but a week later, my left ear crashed again and now it hasn't been that good since. I don't know.

I'm not giving up, obviously, but the challenge is not only can you perform or can you play some, but is it fun? If it's going to be a struggle, why bother? The wonderful thing about music is that, when you're playing and singing music, and you're in the pocket, it begins to play and sing itself for you. It's a wave that you ride and it's the most wonderful, exhilarating feeling in the whole world, but if you're struggling to hear, it's just not the same thing.

Dave Fabry: It's almost as if you're playing in another language, like when you go to a place where you don't know the language. You're having to struggle with that layer in between what it feels like when you're in the groove.

Huey Lewis: I do the same thing sometimes just hearing. When my hearing's really bad, you're struggling to understand what people are saying and it's work. It's not fun. It's the comprehension that's hard. I can hear somebody talking but, if it's Shaquille O'Neal, all I hear is....

Dave Fabry: That's such a low voice, yeah. I can imagine with some of those reverberant voices like Shaquille O'Neal's that you mentioned, makes it especially difficult to pick up and pick up that resonance. When you were fitted in 2018-2019, you were fitted for both ears. Do you wear your hearing aids in both ears all the time or are there times when you wear just one or the other?

Huey Lewis: No, I wear them both all the time. I mean, I take them out to go take a shower, that's it. I have to have them in, both of them, all the time.

Dave Fabry: Excellent. We know that not only for speech understanding but also for the ability to locate sounds, that spatial awareness that we refer to ... If you just wore one, you would



be able to tell that a sound was present but not locate where it was. That's really the benefit. As long as it's serviceable, as you mentioned, on both sides, and we can provide amplification, you're going to be able to tell the source of the sound as well as be able to detect it better if you're wearing two. That's great that you always wear the two.

Huey Lewis: Well, honestly, the first thing I recommend to anybody with hearing loss is hearing aids, Starkey hearing aids. They take a bit of getting used to because stuff's going to sound a little different but you can get used to it and, when you do, you can't live without them because it's way easier to hear things. It just makes life a lot better.

Dave Fabry: Wow. Thank you for saying that and, like I said, we're not going to give up on assisting you with music, as well. It is often the case that people still have stigma associated with hearing loss and using hearing aids. Did you find when you began in 2018-2019 to wear hearing aids that you noticed that people observing you were wearing them, or did you care? I think our parents ... My parents were more stigmatized by hearing loss and hearing aids. I just want to hear, so it doesn't matter to me if someone knows that I've got a device on. Now, the ones that connect to smartphones, it's really the performance and the benefit that I'm going after, not whether someone sees that I'm wearing hearing aids.

Huey Lewis: Well, that's old school. Everybody used to worry about how they look. Nowadays, if you don't have two earbuds in your ear, you're not cool. I mean, look at all the kids today. They're all running around with the earbuds. If you don't have something in your ear, you're not cool. I've never, ever worried about ... First of all, people don't notice, oddly enough. I don't care whether they do or not but I guess, if you're worried about whether people see them or not, most people don't. I have molds, which should be very visible, but people don't notice.

Dave Fabry: One of the advocacy groups for people with hearing loss had said, "Your hearing loss is more conspicuous than your hearing aids." I think the way that you mentioned it, everyone's got stuff in their ears now and we're trying to make hearing aids cool by enabling them to be directly connected to smartphones so that you can stream podcasts like this, phone calls, audio, audiobooks, et cetera, anytime you want, and that connectivity is a large part of the way that we've been on a journey to move hearing aids from single purpose into multi-purpose, multi-function ones. I'm glad to hear that you're finding the benefits of that, using them and, really, as well, for me, it's a dream come true to have people say "I don't care if people see that I'm wearing hearing aids as long as I'm getting the benefits from them."

Huey Lewis: That's exactly the way I feel about it. I never cared anyway but the benefits are what we're after, for sure.

Dave Fabry: ... That's the thing I wanted to say was I know that you're a huge sports fan. You had an album with Huey Lewis and the News called Sports, and I know you're a baseball fan, you're a big Giants fan, you're a 49er fan, I won't hold that against you being a Packer fan, but one of the ways I think that you've really been able to appreciate some of the



benefits but also probably continue to have some suggestions is using an accessory that enables the direct stream to come from the TV to your instruments. Talk a little bit about that.

Huey Lewis: Well, that's needed. The table mic plugs into a digital audio splitter that comes out of the TV. Then, the table mic broadcasts to my hearing aids. And it's really the only way [I can hear sports. Sports, the sound ... they want it to sound exciting so they have a lot of crowd noise. The crowd noise is just "chchchch" to me so I can't hear what they're saying. I've got to have the hearing aids.

Dave Fabry: One of the things ... the table mic we talked about. It's a Bluetooth accessory that enables you ... I don't know that you've had the opportunity. You have people to your home, I know, for dinners, but have you had the opportunity to use the table mic in a restaurant because we're still coming out of COVID and I don't know how often you find yourself in those challenging listening environments where there's background noise and using that wireless accessory.

Huey Lewis: I'll tell you what the table mic works great for is just to plug it into, say, a computer or, when I'm on the airplane, I take my table mic and plug it into the TV screen, then it broadcasts directly to my hearing aids. That's fantastic.

Dave Fabry: Excellent. Again, you point to ... We have the technology, and I like to say that the table mic, like other Bluetooth accessories, really democratizes the use of these accessories when hearing aids alone are not enough. The signal to noise benefits for speech are considerable but, as you say, the user experience has to be straightforward. For that connection to the screen on an airplane or on a computer to be able to do a conference call like this and a podcast like this, really enables when hearing aids alone are not enough, but we need to continue to work especially with those individuals who really struggle in background noise like you do with the Meniere's to be able to take that benefit and get the ease of use. We'll take that feedback and continue to work on optimizing the user experience.

Dave Fabry: So you've been a fan of the ... Who's your favorite 49er? I know you're pretty good buds with Joe Montana from the old days, but ...

Huey Lewis: I'm still good friends with Joe but I knew a lot of them. We kind of came up together but Dwight Clark was a really great friend of mine who passed away here a couple years ago.

Huey Lewis: Was a special guy, just a great guy. I still stay in touch with Joe and Ronnie Lott. Eddie DeBartolo's been such a great owner. He still assembles the teams every now and again. We all still get together and reminisce. Eddie's been great to everybody. It's still like a family, the 49ers, and it was great times, great times.

Dave Fabry: I know you sang the National Anthem numerous times at some of the sporting events, too, and some of those still give me chills when I go and I look for the YouTube videos.



Huey Lewis: We've done a lot of anthems, lots of anthems.

Dave Fabry: One thing that I ... Lately, there's been a focus on movies and TV shows that focus on and address, really, a person's journey with hearing loss. Have you seen The Sound of Metal movie that talks about the musician who suddenly loses his hearing? Have you seen that one?

Huey Lewis: I have not. I have seen ... Have you seen Moonlight Sonata ... What is it? A Movement in Deafness?

Dave Fabry: Yep.

Huey Lewis: That's a nice one, too.

Dave Fabry: Sure have. Even A Quiet Place kind of has a hearing theme to it, if you will, a device that doesn't exist but bridges between hearing aids and cochlear implants. For me, it's interesting because my whole career, I focused on saying "Gosh, I wish we'd raise awareness for the importance of hearing as a health condition that connects all of us together." Certainly at Starkey, that's our central mission that our founder, Bill Austin, really started. You've had the opportunity to engage with him many times on this but it's nice, in a way, to see hearing enter the vernacular of the discussion now in society, and the importance of it. Probably even during COVID, we've realized the importance of hearing to connect to people, whether it's on a podcast like this or face to face, and depriving that social interaction really led to a lot of loneliness and isolation for a lot of people. I'm glad we're coming out of it now.

Huey Lewis: That's certainly true. I mean, you don't have to tell me about the importance of hearing.

Dave Fabry: Of your heroes ... You mentioned your dad and the importance that he had. You mentioned some of the sporting colleagues and friends that you've had over your life. Who's been most influential?

Huey Lewis: To me?

Dave Fabry: Yep.

Huey Lewis: Who's been the most influential to me? Well, wow. Several people but one of them is Philip Lynott, the lead singer and founder of the band called Thin Lizzy. We opened up for them in England. Phil taught me so much about music, about the running of a band, about being a band leader. That's what he taught me. Not so much the music but how to manage a band, how to deal with the press, how to deal with the crew, how to deal with promoters and all this stuff. I just learned so much ... and fans and all that. Philip was an amazing rock star. He was just an amazing guy and a great performer. He was a mentor for me. Probably had the largest influence on me, career-wise, of anybody.

Dave Fabry: Their music was not half-bad, either. I did enjoy Thin Lizzy, as well.



Huey Lewis: The Boys Are Back In Town

Dave Fabry: Absolutely. That's the one I was thinking of. Now, it's interesting you say because people will say "Well, that guy's a rock star," and for me, having been around ... because I'm a drummer, I hang around with musicians. The notion of someone being a rock star isn't giving ... Maybe sometimes it might be giving an amazing performance but it's really when you look at all of the gigs that you've done and then you go out, some poor schlub like me has saved a few bucks to come to one of your concerts and to make it feel like when you're performing The Power of Love or any of your other hits, the very first time that I'm hearing it is probably the 1,000th or 10,000th time that you've performed it. That, to me, is a rock star, someone that can bring that energy. You always have in the concerts that I've heard you.

Huey Lewis: Britain is interesting because in Britain, they really do treat their pop stars as a proper profession. Here in America, it's kind of like, I don't know, it's not a real domestic profession. In Britain, it really is, and the reason is because they have a monarchy in Britain. What is a king and queen but rock stars? They understand the role of a rock star in the world: to escape, to alleviate people's problems, to make them feel better about themselves and so on. It's quite an honorable profession in Britain, and I think not so much here. I learned all that with Phil up in England, when I lived in England for two years.

Dave Fabry: Well, thank you for sharing that. Well-

Huey Lewis: It's interesting to note that Britain really only produces something like 11% of the world's market in terms of music but when you look at super bands-

Dave Fabry: ... They're all over.

Huey Lewis: ... What, 60-70% of them are British.

Dave Fabry: Yeah, they're all over it.

Huey Lewis: The Stones, the Who, the ...

Dave Fabry: That little band called the Beatles, too.

Huey Lewis: Yeah,

Dave Fabry: I guess I've heard of them. They might have a future, too, but no, you're right. When you think of rock and roll history, in every era, the Brits have been influential, whether it was in punk or-

Huey Lewis: Because-

Dave Fabry: ... whether it was in rock and roll, et cetera.

Huey Lewis: ... They know-

Dave Fabry: They know how to handle hit.

Huey Lewis: ... It's not just about music, it's about identifying with somebody and what they are is they're rock stars. They understand that and it's quite a noble profession in Britain.

Huey Lewis: Why wouldn't it be?

Dave Fabry: ... the link to the monarchy, which is really, as you said-

Huey Lewis: Absolutely.

Dave Fabry: ... a rock star.

Huey Lewis: What is Prince Philip but a rock star?

Dave Fabry: No doubt.

Huey Lewis: He doesn't even need a guitar.

Dave Fabry: No, and he's got the wardrobe already.

Huey Lewis: They do that, right? They do pomp and circumstance, Britain.

Dave Fabry: Absolutely. It's all performance.

Dave Fabry: I got it. We're drawing to an end of our time and we're also coming to the end of 2021. What sorts of things ... We've been in the COVID-19 pandemic. I know that you continue to be involved. You've been involved in ... I saw Blacklist, you were ... a couple months ago. What other projects that you have coming up and what sorts of things are you reflecting on as this year comes to a close?

Huey Lewis: Well, we have a musical called The Heart of Rock and Roll that we're very proud of that we put up in San Diego last year, sold it out, got great reviews and everything. We're trying to bring it to Broadway, which is tough because there's only so many theaters and so on, but we're in line and we've partnered up with a couple of producers, Hunter Arnold and Tom Kirdahy, who produce a lot of the stuff on Broadway. They're pretty bullish on the thing, so we're hoping to get it to Broadway maybe 2023.

I have another TV show that I'm developing with Aaron Kaplan that's in its infant stages yet but we're hopeful for that. And Back to the Future: The Musical was up in London and they're playing a couple of our songs. In fact, we're the last song, the encore and all that, so that's what we've got going so far.



Dave Fabry: Wow. What are you doing in your spare time? I mean, that's amazing. I can't wait for all of those.

Huey Lewis: Well, I've got other stuff going on. I'm writing a little bit, too, so ...

Dave Fabry: You are. You've been promising a novel for a while but said you were just too busy. It seems like you're still busy now but-

Huey Lewis: I'm still busy. Writing is amazing work. It takes so long and you've got to rewrite and ... jeez, it's brutal. I never realized it was so hard until I tried.

Dave Fabry: ... I can understand that.

Huey Lewis: But I'm enjoying it, I'm enjoying it.

Dave Fabry: Is there a favorite concert or performance during your career that stands out from all of the others?

Huey Lewis: You know, there's lots of them. We had some nice shows. We played Paris, we played the Coliseum in Paris. Springsteen and Bob Geldof came by to the show and sat in. That was a big night. We played three nights at Wembley in London. That was great. There's several of them, lots of them. Lots of great memories.

Dave Fabry: Was We Are the World as memorable of an experience as it turned out to be? I mean, from my end, looking at the array of performers on that video and...

Huey Lewis: No question. It was amazing. I mean, imagine ... Normally, in one's lifetime, you don't get to meet those people for a second, let alone spend a whole evening with them and work with them. There's a bond that's developed there that to this day is there. If you were there, those of us who were there, like Kenny Loggins, me, Bruce and just everybody. There's a bond that we have because we were all there that evening. It was an amazing evening.

Dave Fabry: I can only imagine. Well, I can't tell you how much I appreciate your talking to us today about your musical career, your remarkable musical career, your hearing loss and the use of hearing aids. Thanks for your kind words about how Starkey hearing aids have been benefiting you. We'll continue to work on that. I want to just ... I talked to you about ... I first met you in 2001 when you came to San Diego and spoke at our convention, gave me a harmonica. In August, August 27th of 2001, you were at the Minnesota State Fair and were kind enough to give me tickets. It was one of my first dates with my wife at that time.

We came backstage and you invited us to the after party, but it was a Monday night which, for me, was a school night, so I had to drive back down to Rochester at that time, and I was still working at Mayo Clinic. I guess maybe ... My wife still married me given that I passed up the opportunity to go to an after party for a Huey Lewis concert, then



maybe it was hip to be square, a little bit, in that respect that I had to get back home and go back to work that night. Thanks for setting me on a trajectory where I convinced this woman to marry me, but it was in no small part due to that first or early date in our dating experience.

Huey Lewis: Well, that's good. I'll take complete credit for that.

Dave Fabry: You can have it. Well, with that, Huey, I think you've been very generous with your time and I can't tell you how appreciative I am for that. I wish you all of the success. I look forward to seeing you again soon, and we'll work on tweaking those devices for the good and bad days, and working to continue to refine our accessories so that you can enjoy sports. I'm not ruling out the possibility we're going to get some improved sound quality for music in the future-

Huey Lewis: That'd be great.

Dave Fabry: ... even with the Meniere's disease.

Huey Lewis: I would love that. I'd appreciate it. Thanks.

Dave Fabry: Thank you. To our listeners, thanks for listening to this episode of Sound Bites. If you enjoyed this conversation, please rate and review us on your preferred podcast platform. You can hit subscribe and be sure you don't miss every episode. If you have any suggestions for the future, please hit us with that, too because, as they say, we're all ears. Thanks for listening and we'll hear you next time.