

*Musical Journey
& Senior Care
Advocate*

**The Story of
Tibi Botocan**

“Watch out, Ozzy Osbourne. Or, rather, Osbourne’s bassist”

—STATESMAN JOURNAL, SALEM OR



Growing up in communist Romania was an unmatched life experience. To me, it was normal because it was all I knew. It wasn't until I was a teenager that I realized there was a different world outside my country's borders. It was a mix of good and bad, but helped me become the person I am today. The biggest privilege in my life has been my family - my wonderful parents and my awesome sister Ligia.

Music has always been a part of me, something I could feel flowing through my veins. Romania had good bands and artists, but it wasn't until I was 10 years old and a friend gave me a few cassettes of Abba, Bonney M, and the Bee Gees, that I was hooked. They sounded different than anything I'd heard before, and I started searching for more and more Western and American music. You couldn't find it in our regular music stores, so we had to be creative.

Finding Music

I grew up in Tulcea, a beautiful port city on the Danube River. It is the last major city before the Danube River flows into the Danube Delta and ultimately the Black Sea. At the time, Romania had one of the biggest fishing fleets in Europe, and many of those ships anchored in port, and the fishermen lived in town. The fishermen became our main source of all Western items, including jeans, Adidas shoes, African masks, cigarettes, cassette and video players, LP's, deodorant, soap, and many more items. Romanian stores only carried items made in Romania. Some hotels carried American goods, but these had to be purchased with US dollars. And you didn't want to be caught with US currency. It meant being questioned by "Securitate" (the Romanian secret police) and probably sent to prison.

But the fishermen were the answer. Once I made the right connections, the

music started pouring in. Not only that, but I connected with other people who shared my passion. We listened late into the night to bands like Deep Purple, Uriah Heep, Jethro Tull, Whitesnake, etc. Those nights would end around the same time the sun rose.

Becoming a Musician

Music was in my blood, and I decided to become a professional musician. My 21-year musical career began when I played my first show in 10th grade. We were a three-piece band, all beginners, and could only play three songs, all by the Beatles. I played guitar. To get the right distortion sound, I put tiny holes in the amplifier's speaker. At the right volume, I could get the grunge sound I was looking for. We didn't sound great at that first show, but it was a euphoric moment. The stage was my new home!

After much begging, my father bought me an electric guitar. I would practice in

my bedroom all night long. To really hear an electric guitar, you need an amplifier. I was able to connect my guitar cord to a Romanian-made radio, and that became my practice amplifier.

After high school, I started playing with local bands, and from the beginning, I was lucky to be surrounded by very good musicians who pushed me to get better and better. At one point, I was invited to be the bass player for a popular Romanian band at a Black Sea resort. The experience showed me that I was a bassist at heart. It is what I played during my entire musical career.

I played more and more. Clubs, National tours, TV, Radio, recording studios, arenas, stadiums, and resorts became my normal venues. I won many National and International musical contests with bands I played with. Nevertheless, an artist's life under a communist government and dictatorship is not glorious or free. There was censorship at every corner. Before every TV appearance or song played on the radio, the lyrics had to be verified and approved. Nothing could mention the

government unless it was praised. Most bands were creative in writing songs that connected with the audience on different levels. Long hair was the trend, but it wasn't allowed on TV. We tied our hair up behind our heads, but one time, part of my hair got loose and we were no longer allowed to appear on TV.

Times Changed

In 1989, the communist government fell and President Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife were arrested and executed. New opportunities arose. My band was hired to play in France, which was the first time I was truly exposed to Western society. We adapted quickly, but it felt like we'd just entered a different world. Touring across France, playing small and large venues, opening shows for French National acts, and being the headlining act was an amazing experience.

Coming to America

In 1992, I arrived in Salem, Oregon, where my mother, sister, and uncle lived. I thought I knew some English, but I couldn't carry a conversation. I remember

walking to a nearby tavern alone, trying to practice how I should order. I walked in, sat at the bar, and asked, "May I have a beer please?" The bartender asked, "What kind?" That threw me off. After much hand gesturing, I finally got my beer. I was relieved - but also determined to learn English.

I enrolled in ESL class, and the teacher gave us an assignment to write our life story. When I turned mine in, she was surprised by my musical past and alerted the local news. A reporter reached out, and two weeks after the interview, one of my family members called with the news - I was in the paper! The first page of the Lifestyle section was titled, "Romanian Rocker's New Beat is Salem!" The first sentence said, "Watch out, Ozzy Osbourne. Or, rather, Osbourne's bassist." Wow, I was listening to Ozzy in Romania and now his name and my name are mentioned in the same sentence! The article ended by saying I wanted to connect with other local musicians. Lots of calls came in and I started playing with local bands. And my American music career took off.

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Being A Musician in America

Throughout the years, I played with several different bands, continuously surrounded by world-class musicians. Worth mentioning are Voodoo Tuna, an excellent alternative-rock band I created, Higher Ground from Portland, a bluegrass-flamenco-rock headlining act that traveled up and down the West Coast, and Lonesome Road, a very popular country rock band headlining all major state fairs, rodeos and the Oregon Jamboree.

With Lonesome Road, I moved to Nashville, and life took a new direction again. For 8 years, I had the privilege to experience and live in the music capital of the world. I played most of the clubs in downtown Broadway - Robert's Western World, Tootsies Orchid Lounge, The Legend, The Stage on Broadway, The Red Iguana, etc. For more than a year, we were the house band at Jack Daniels Club at Gaylord Opryland Resort. We were also on tour a lot, sometimes as headliners but mostly as an opening act. Having our own tour bus (named Trigger) made traveling across the country easier and everything better.

Getting Out Of Music

In 2008, after careful consideration, I decided to exit the music industry and experience life in a different way. Loving the outdoors as much as I do, it was time for a change. During my time in Nashville, I didn't go out in nature once. Touring across the country, I always paid attention to my surroundings, searching for that perfect place to settle. Seattle had been a favorite for a long time. So, I moved to Seattle.

Senior Living

My father was a doctor, and my mother was a nurse. I grew up in a healthcare environment. I often went to the hospital to visit my dad, interacting with other doctors, nurses and patients. It felt like home. Many other family friends were involved in healthcare too. Despite my father's wish for me to become a doctor, I chose music instead. But while living in Oregon, music was not my only occupation. I also worked, on and off, in the senior living / senior care industry. I had a passion for caring for people, especially the elderly. I was always intrigued by my grandparents, their lives, and their wisdom. There was a sense of comfort in being with them. Working in a skilled nursing facility exposed me to all

levels of care, a wide variety of care needs, insurance companies, the corporate world of health care, several layers of management and everything in between. It was the work environment where I've truly experienced the real pulse of life. I was helping elderly patients, and thinking about aging and the struggle to maintain independence, dignity, and self-respect. In 2009, I was offered a position at a reputable skilled nursing facility in downtown Bellevue. I worked there for several years as their Admissions and Marketing Director. I became familiar with the area and got to know many in the healthcare industry.

Starting a Business

I knew I could make a bigger impact. On a Friday evening, almost ten years ago, I told my wife I wanted to quit my job and start my own company - A referral, advisory and placement service for the elderly in need of Assisted Living, Adult Family Homes, Memory Care, Hospice care and any other type of senior care. I wanted to share all the knowledge I'd gained throughout the years in a personal, customized, and service-oriented way. It was a hard decision, but also the right decision. My wife Ana-Maria was of great

support; she encouraged and believed in me (even though my daughter Ariana was just born).

A1 Senior Care Advisors started, and since then, I've lost both of my parents, both suffering from advanced Dementia. I've had the privilege of meeting and working with so many people. I feel rewarded every single day. I am grateful to have the opportunity again and again to help a family in need. For most people, the senior care industry is an unknown world, difficult to navigate, confusing and filled with technicalities. For the elderly, it is crucial to start in the right direction from the beginning. Finding the right care facility that meets the criteria for the level of care both now and in the future, located in the preferred geographical area, and compatible with the individual's financial situation, is crucial. This is what I do!

I invite you to visit my website at www.alseniorcareadvisors.com I will be here when you need me.

Tibi Botocan



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