



Singer Tony Bennett as a young man, Russ Lorenson in Tony Bennett Tribute.

## "Just In Time"...Along Comes Russ Lorenson With A Fabulous Love Letter And Tribute To The Great Tony Bennett

by Buzzin' Lee Hartgrave, Aug. 11, 2006

The show is called *Benedetto/Blessed* and I knew the moment I entered the Plush Room with the subdued lighting and the flowers on the piano that Lorenson knows how to set a mood. Many times I have been to the same room with lighting effects that looked more like an operating room.

Lorenson does an early hits medley made famous by Bennett – all have become classics. Here are a few: 'Boulevard of Broken Dreams', 'Stranger in Paradise', the exceptionally huge hit for Bennett 'Because of You', and the wonderful catchy 'Rags to Riches' – which happens to be one of my favorites.

During his show, Lorenson gives us some little known facts about Bennett. He doesn't just talk about them -- Lorenson makes them fun and interesting. All together – the music, the band and Lorenson's voice make the evening one that is not easy to forget. And, who would want to. The thing about Lorenson's voice is that it seems to fit into many different song styles. In this show, if you squint your eyes and look at the stage and listen to the music – you will swear that Bennett is right there in that room with you. Yep, Lorenson sings these Bennett hits with heart. You can tell that he really is into the music – his soul won't let him do anything else. I might even go so far as to say that Lorenson is possessed by Bennett's hits.

I was transported to Florida when I heard him sing "Fly Me To The Moon" which was first recorded by Bennett in 1965. I was on vacation then – fell in love, and boy does that song bring back memories for me – including when I caught the train back to Chicago with tears running down my cheeks. Awww...young love.

There is so much terrific music in this show that you would like to hear about, but I don't have space to list them all. All I can say is that there is a bunch of songs that Lorenson brings to us that cover decades, and it's not just crooning – it's dreamy.

The gentle sounds of autumn are in the 'Autumn Medley' which starts out with 'Autumn leaves'. I don't know about you, but I wanted to find a bunch of Autumn Leaves and just lay down in them. As good as this medley is, I would have liked to hear a few strings. Especially with 'Autumn Leaves'. Tony Bennett has just turned 80, and he is still putting out music. I assume that Mr. Lorenson will probably be doing the same.

THE BAND: KELLY PARK, REID WHATLEY, ERIC THOMPSON, AND TONY MALFATTI GAVE THE EVENING 'THAT FASCINATIN' RHYTHM'.

RATING: FOUR GLASSES OF CHAMPAGNE!!!! (Highest Rating)