

RUSS LORENSON Biography

Russ Lorensen has established a reputation as one of the San Francisco Bay Area's leading interpreters of jazz standards, with a sound and approach that place him at the intersection of Broadway, jazz, and pop – the very essence of the Great American Songbook. **Jazz Review** says that "Lorensen is not just a crooner covering the traditional Sinatra style or trying to be the next Connick; he is his own man."

Nominated for a 2007 MAC Award by the Manhattan Association of Cabarets and Clubs, Russ Lorensen's passion for the stage started as a youngster, with a performing career that began at age seven in his home town of Philadelphia. As an actor he has appeared in musical productions with theatre companies throughout California and has toured with the **National Theatre for Children**. As a choral conductor and vocal coach, Russ was the Associate Conductor of the award-winning **California Youth Chorale** for 5 years. As a vocalist he has toured the US, UK and Europe, appearing in concert with such luminaries as Broadway star Karen Mason, "Queen of Cabaret" Andrea Marcovicci, jazz diva Wesla Whitfield, and as the opening act for the legendary Eartha Kitt.

Russ celebrates an American music icon in his show, **Benedetto/Blessed: A Tribute to the Life and Music of Tony Bennett**. Lorensen's tribute to the man whom Frank Sinatra called "the best singer in the business" premiered in July 2006 as the opening act for the legendary Eartha Kitt and is currently enjoying sold-out runs across the country, including both The Empire Plush Room and Jazz at Pearl's in San Francisco, Sterling's Upstairs in Los Angeles, and New York's famed Iridium Jazz Club. The show is musically directed by renowned jazz pianist Kelly Park.

In honor – not impersonation – of Mr. Bennett (whose birth name translates to "blessed" in Italian), and his successful career spanning over six decades, Lorensen performs an array of the crooner's biggest hits, including "I Left My Heart in San Francisco," "Fly Me To The Moon," "Because of You" and "The Shadow of Your Smile."

"I find great inspiration in Mr. Bennett's music and artistic vision," says Lorensen. "The Great American Songbook has had no greater champion, and I am honored to be singing Mr. Bennett's greatest hits and sharing the story of his life."

Russ' previous nightclub show, *A Little Travelin' Music*, played to sold-out audiences on both coasts. His debut CD, of the same name, was released in May 2006 on the LML Music label and features songs from the show and includes duets with special guests Shawn Ryan and Klea Blackhurst. His second CD, *What I Want For Christmas*, was also released on LML Music in 2006, and has received extensive radio airplay in major markets across the US. Both CD's were included on the Nominating Ballot for the 2006 Grammy Awards in the category of "Best Traditional Pop Vocal Album" alongside such artists as Tony Bennett, Michael Bubl , and John Pizzarelli.

In recognition of his solid and sophisticated musical vocabulary, **Talkin' Broadway.com** called Russ "an elegant performer who has faultless musical taste and vocal phrasing. He has a voice that is reminiscent of some of the great singers like Tony Bennett, Chet Baker and a little of Mel Torm ." **The Los Angeles Times** said that he brings "a supple voice and strong sense of characterization to all his songs." The **San Diego Union-Tribune** said that his "relaxed, easy deliveries...seem natural and heartfelt..." **BeyondChron.com** said, "Not only does Lorensen have the soul of the greats – Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett and other dream crooners of the 50's, 60's and 70's – he has the band with him to really bring those decades to life." The **Coronado Journal** simply called him "...irresistible..."