

RUSS LORENSON CHANNELS TONY BENNETT IN “BENEDETTO/BLESSED”

by Buzzin' Lee Hartgrave, June 4, 2010

Singer Russ Lorensen is the only singer that I have ever heard that infuses his own great style of singing while actually channeling singer Tony Bennett. In his show at the Eureka Theater he does exactly that. He gets to the soul of Bennett without doing an imitation. There are plenty of singers around who imitate – but Lorensen is so clever with his take on Bennett that he is like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. For a flash he is himself – especially when he tells us the tidbits about Tony Bennett – and then he turns his head and he is another person altogether.

The selection of music that Lorensen has chosen from is right from Bennett's song book - from the 40's into some current songs that are still big favorites now.

Musical Director Kelly Park and Lorensen came up with a snazzy new arrangement for the song “One For My Baby (And One More For the Road), which was first a big hit for Sinatra. Bennett's take with the song was to make it more upbeat and breezy. It worked – the song was a huge hit for Bennett as well. In a movie Ida Lupino sang the song at a bar – using a slow smoky sound in her voice.

Lorensen gives us lots of tidbits about Tony's beginnings, his name change and what he did for a living before he became an international star. He is still singing and making appearances in his 80's.

If you're a fan of really good musical singing -- then you will love this show. I have seen it many times – and I still find new things to love about it.

This Tribute to Tony Bennett is also a Tribute to Russ Lorensen. He sings with elegance and piercing insight. He embodies every nuance about Tony Bennett without trying to act like him. And that, my friends, is what great genius is all about.

RATING: FOUR GLASSES OF CHAMPAGNE!!!! (highest rating) –trademarked-