

SAN FRANCISCO

by Richard Connema

Russ Lorenson Returns to San Francisco with *Standard Time*

Russ Lorenson recently presented his new show *Standard Time* at the Rrazz Room at the Hotel Nikko in San Francisco. Russ, who has one of the coolest voices around, is truly one of the great cabaret artists singing today.

Standard songs are usually by the Gershwins, Cole Porter and Irving Berlin. Lorenson contends that great songs in the standard style have been written in the last 20 years by such writers as Harry Connick Jr, Peter Cincotti, Michael Feinstein, Andrew Lippa and even his pianist, Kelly Park. He certainly proved that to be the case on his one night gig.

Russ Lorenson entered the stage looking very suave in white shirt, black vest and a dashing fedora. He had an immediate relationship with the audience. His laid-back delivery of both romantic and upbeat songs was pitch perfect. He opened the show with a swinging arrangement of "Raise the Roof" from Andrew Lippa's *The Wild Party*, which gave the show a great start. From there on in, it was smooth sailing for this talented artist. During the 90-minute gig, he sang nineteen songs with very little patter.

Russ gave sleek readings of the Cincotti-written "Are You the One" and "I Changed the Rules." He sang a swinging version of Kelly Park's "Diamond In the Sky," a variation on "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" that the composer wrote for his daughter Christina when she was four years old. He was flawless when singing Harry Connick Jr.'s "Forever, For Now" (lyrics by Ramsey McLean) and "I'll Dream of You Again." Russ turned comic when he sang Michael Garin's "My Hand," a bawdy song to one's hand that probably could be X-rated. He ended the show with a very new song written by Kelly Park and Russ called "It's Raining Memories," which was inspired by the title of the Ronny Graham song (sung by Robert Clarey) from *New Faces of 1952*. However, this is an entirely new song, sung with great passion.

Back-up was terrific with Los Angeles drummer Brian Carmody, New Yorker Tom Hubbard on bass, and Terrence Brewer on a special plugged-in Benedetto Guitar—his playing was dazzling and his duet with Russ on Maury Yeston's "Danglin" was incomparable.

Although Russ Lorenson's voice has been compared to Tony Bennett, Chet Baker and Mel Torme, this artist is his own man.

- [Richard Connema](#)