

Interview Transcript

OF ALL THE MUSICAL GENRES OUT THERE, WHY FRANK SINATRA?

Because Frank Sinatra had the unique ability to interpret a lyric and tell its story with the same degree of emotion the lyricist intended. Similar to the way a method actor studies and ultimately becomes a certain character. You can listen to anyone singing and instantly know if you're listening to a beautiful voice or not. With Sinatra's voice, for me anyway, I sensed his emotion a great deal above what one would call a beautiful voice with beautiful tones. And that is why Frank Sinatra has had and continues to have fans of all walks of life across the world. Simply put, Frank Sinatra was able to penetrate them to their very souls by giving life to his songs especially his ballads.

DO YOU TRY TO SOUND LIKE SINATRA OR DOES IT COME NATURALLY?

When I first began to study voice I paid careful attention to Sinatra's style of singing. What I mean is, I tried to emulate his breathing-using many short breaths between words as he sang, his phrasing-whether he timed a lyric just in front of or slightly behind the music and his diction-the way he carefully pronounced every syllable in the lyric so there was no mistaking one single word. Though flattering, I don't believe I sound like Sinatra. What is true is that I use the combination of his music, breathing, timing and diction which all contribute to the Sinatra style.

DID YOU ALWAYS KNOW YOU COULD SING?

I actually never knew I could sing because I never sang as a child. It was quite accidental, or not, that I unknowingly stumbled upon Frank Sinatra when I was 18 years old. I heard the name Sinatra before but that was the extent of it. I didn't know a single thing about him or the genre of music known as the great American songbook or jazz standards. One afternoon, when I was alone, I flipped through the radio dial and settled upon relaxing band music. Remember the radios with a wire and a red marker that twisted up and down an AM or FM band until you got rid of the static?

Suddenly a voice began to sing and it captivated my attention because I could actually understand all the words I were hearing. Not only that, but they were such beautiful words. It was almost like listening to someone's private love letter being carefully shared with me complete with all the emotion it takes to reveal one's heart.

HAVE YOU EVER TRAINED PROFESSIONALLY?

Yes. By the time I was 21 years old I was sinking deeper and not just in Sinatra's songs but the entire genre of music. It was as though I were born too late. I was so hooked and full of joy that I even stopped watching TV and listening to modern radio and started smoking cigars and even a pipe. I felt like Christopher Reeve in *Somewhere In Time* or Lindsay Wagner in *The Two Worlds Of Jenny Logan*. I filled my ears constantly with as much of this music as I could. Between the ages eighteen and twenty-one I attended many concerts including Steve Lawrence and Eydie Gorme, Jerry Vale, Buddy Greco, Julius Larosa, Tony Bennett, Jimmy Roselli, Al Martino, Vic Damone and of course Frank Sinatra. I decided for the fun of it, as a hobby to take voice lessons. Thankfully, I made all my calls on a Sunday afternoon because the only one that answered that day was Laurence Bogue, professor of music at The Juilliard School. With a very loud, deep voice Bogue welcomed my call and agreed to audition me to see if he had anything to work with before he would take me on as his student. I became his faithful student two nights a week for about three years.

WHAT DO YOU OFFER TO PEOPLE WHO WANT TO HIRE YOU?

Because of the uniqueness of this kind of music, I am considered a specialty act. I am not an impersonator per se only a lover of the great American songbook that just happened to study the very best mentor, Frank Sinatra with the best vocal instructor, Professor Laurence Bogue. In order to work more often I've learned to become more adaptable. My performances are similar it's just the way that I am packaged that changes. I perform nationwide with big bands to smaller combos and even as a solo act with carefully orchestrated instrumental tracks.