

A Brief Presentation on Tony Bennett

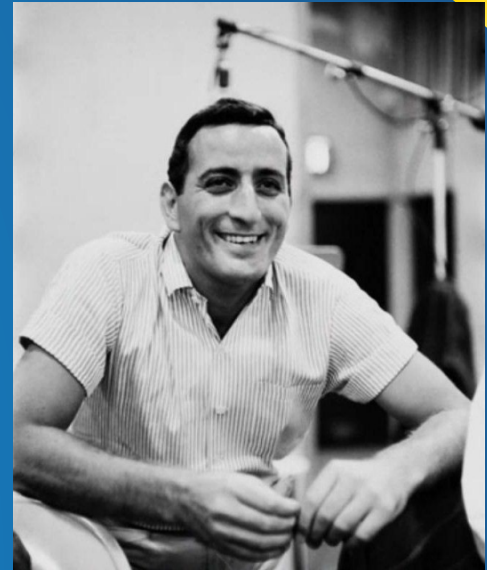
MUS 1013, Group 1, May 2016

Megan Koenig, James
Schmidt, Madison
Domm, Elizabeth
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Johnson and Lydia
Sour



Early years

- Born August 3, 1926 as Anthony Dominick Benedetto
- His father died when Tony was 10
- He grew up in Queens, a borough of New York City
- He attended the High School of Industrial Arts in Manhattan
- His early passions were singing, painting, and music



His big break

- The first time he sang in a nightclub was in 1946 at Shangri-La in Astoria
- His big break came in 1949 when Bob Hope noticed him
 - Tony recalls, ““Bob Hope came down to check out my act. He liked my singing so much that after the show he came back to see me in my dressing room and said, ‘Come on kid, you're going to come to the Paramount and sing with me.’ But first he told me he didn't care for my stage name (Joe Bari) and asked me what my real name was. I told him, ‘My name is Anthony Dominick Benedetto’ and he said, ‘We’ll call you Tony Bennett.’ And that's how it happened. A new Americanized name—the start of a wonderful career and a glorious adventure that has continued for over 60 years.”¹

Awards

- 17 Grammy Awards¹
 - Record of the Year in 1995 for “MTV Unplugged”
- 7 Emmy Awards¹
 - Primetime special “Tony Bennett: An American Classic”
- 24 songs in Top 40¹
 - “Because of You”
 - “Rags to Riches”
 - Much more



Influences

In an interview with the ¹⁰LA Times, Tony Bennett discussed three people who largely influenced his music and style.

- Leonardo da Vinci: Helped Tony realize art is never complete and always changes.
- Frank Sinatra: Gave him courage
- Art Tatum: Tony studied Art's jazzy style



Who was influenced by Tony's Music



Wanting to deviate from pop music and produce jazz, Lady Gaga collaborated with Tony Bennett on the 2014 album *Cheek to Cheek*

Interview about Lady Gaga

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=47R_yoirN84

“[Lady Gaga] will become bigger than Elvis Presley”

-Tony Bennett (from video interview above)

Musical Style

In an interview with the Winston-Salem Journal, Tony Bennett said:

I'm not staying contemporary for the big record companies, I don't follow the latest fashions. I never sing a song that's badly written. In the 1920s and '30s, there was a renaissance in music that was the equivalent of the artistic Renaissance. Cole Porter, Johnny Mercer and others just created the best songs that had ever been written. These are classics, and finally they're not being treated as light entertainment. This is classical music.
(Clodfelter, 2010)

Musical Style Continued

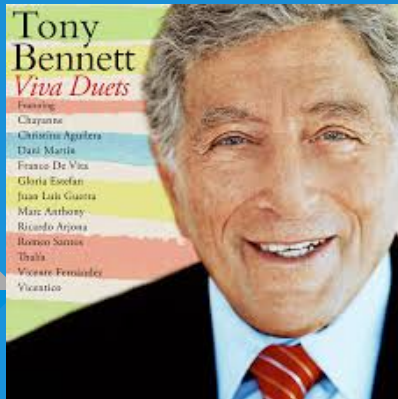
- Bennett's style is "classic" pop music
- He sings about love
- His songs have a slow tempo and conjunct (moving slowly between pitches)
- He sings with a homophonic texture
- He uses strings in his instrumentals

Recent Works

In recent years, Tony Bennett has recorded with many current artists. These collaborations have added a unique dynamic to pop music. In 2006, (to mark his 80th birthday) he released an album titled *Tony Bennett: Duets- An American Classic*. On this album he worked with Barbra Streisand, Elton John, Elvis Costello, Bono, and Sting. Due to the success of this album, for his 85th birthday he released the album *Duets II*, on which he again collaborated with many well known musicians including Amy Winehouse, Lady Gaga, and Queen Latifah.

Recent Works Continued

In 2012 he released another album titled *Viva Duets* which features Latin music. Most recently, in 2014, he released an album titled *Cheek to Cheek* with Lady Gaga which includes the songs “It Don’t Mean a Thing”, “I Can’t Give You Anything But Love”, and “Anything Goes”.



Bennett Compared to Other Artists



Frank Sinatra:

- Born in Hoboken, New Jersey, December 12, 1915
- Rose to fame singing big band numbers.
- Most famous during 1940-1950 with dozens of hit songs and albums and even films.
- Bennett considered Sinatra his best friend til the day he died.

Quote by Bennett about Sinatra:

“Sinatra leaves behind a legacy of music, a legacy that will live forever. Five hundred years from now, people will still be listening to his recordings, watching his films, and they’ll say, “There was only one Sinatra.” And that’s not an opinion, its a fact.”

Bennett Compared to Other Artists

Nat King Cole:

- Born in Montgomery, Alabama, March, 17 1919
- Known for being a jazz pianist
- First African-American performer to host a variety of television series. This was the first black man to be in the living rooms of many white families during a time of racial tension.
- He encountered racism first hand during the Civil Rights Movement



Professional & Personal Struggles

Professional

- Bennett wanted to try to explore new songs and new kinds of music.
 - His record company, Columbia, wanted him to repeat his past hits.
 - Differences led for Bennett to leave and to take long hiatus from producing music.

Personal

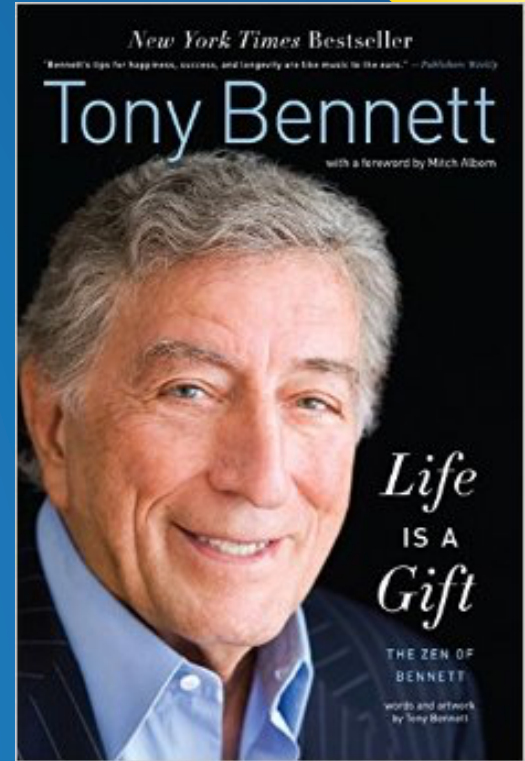
- In 1970s, Bennett was experiencing drug related problems.
 - Cocain & Marijuana
- A near death experience of passing out in a bathtub resulted in Tony Bennett to get his life together.

Life is a Gift: The Zen of Bennett

In 2012, Bennett wrote a memoir of his life. The memoir covers a variety of topics regarding

- His life
- His life in the music industry
- Life lessons
- Who he met
- His life journey, including his past

“If you want to learn something, go to someone older than you, because they have lived longer”
-Tony Bennett



“I think one of the reasons I’m popular again is because I’m wearing a tie. You have to be different.”

-Tony Bennett



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