

Mark Vincent – A Tribute to Mario Lanza (2017)

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01. Because You're Mine 02. Come Prima 03. Nessun Dorma 04. Be My Love 05. The Donkey Serenade 06. The Loveliest Night of the Year 07. E Lucevan Le Stelle 08. 'O Sole Mio 09. Arrivederci Roma 10. Mamma Mia, Che Vo' Sape? 11. Without a Song 12. I'll Walk With God

Mark Vincent gives his fans a live performance of his most recent CD A Tribute To Mario Lanza with a 2 hour concert of Mark Vincent: SINGS Mario Lanza & THE CLASSICS. The 24 year old winner of the third season (2009) of Australia's Got Talent shares his adoration of the American Italian actor and Hollywood star with an audience that were a blend of Lanza fans and Vincent's faithful followers.

Backed by a 20 piece orchestra led by Musical Director Guy Noble, Vincent shares a collection of songs that were part of Lanza's repertoire along with some recognisable operatic works. Ensuring that the audience knows that the concert is promoting the CD, the night is introduced by a documentary style montage of Vincent, Noble and Lanza's daughter Ellisa Lanza Bergman discussing the creation of the record and Vincent's desire to reignite interest and awareness of Lanza's work.

Vincent interspersed the songs, which included Luigi Denza and Peppino Turco's celebratory Funiculli Funiculla, Verdi's La Donna Mob'ile from RIGOLETTO, and Sammy Cahn and Nicholas Brodzsky's Be My Love from THE TOAST OF NEW ORLEANS, with explanations of why he reveres Lanza as well as insights into his own musical journey from 15 year old Caringbah boy thrust into the limelight with the reality television win. His patter is however somewhat stilted due to it being highly scripted which loses the sincerity and connection that he could have achieved. Having seen Vincent perform in the original Sydney season of the recent M. Fair LADY revival, it was interesting to note that his physicality hasn't relaxed since that or

DIRTY DANCING and what was originally dismissed as opening night jitters at the Opera House seemed to actually be a truer reflection of his own style which lacked a naturalness to it with everything in desperate need of a director to spot the rigidity and remove the overly contrived staged deliberateness.

The audience seemed to be dominated by Vincent's fans which seemed to forgive the sound issues. Whilst Vincent has an impressive lower strength and ability to sustain a low note when he wants to, the sound balances for the venue were more akin to a pop or rock concert where everything is set to overpowering. Finer tuning with the sound balance or better microphone control could have reduced the shock of the difference between Vincent's weaker head voice which resulted in detail often disappearing and his stronger lower register. Similarly, guest soprano, New Zealander Jennifer Little had similar issues with sound control leading to overblown top notes. Whilst Vincent's patter talked of his admiration for Lanza's emotional connection in his unfurnished presentation of Ernesto De Curtis' Torna a Soriento in THE GREAT CARUSO he doesn't give the work the expected texture and sensitivity, opting to overact rather than ensuring that the music can speak for itself. Little's presentation of Lerner and Loewe's I Could Have Danced All Night was odd with mixed accents ranging from Italian inflections morphing into British with odd clipped phrasing rather than the traditional fluid joyful tone reducing the expression of Eliza's euphoria. The inclusion of Little is also somewhat unnecessary and the use of an imported singer when there are numerous better sopranos in Sydney seems at odds W.T. Vincent's image of a local boy from the Shire.

Whilst Mark Vincent is proof of the star making ability of reality television and his efforts to raise awareness of Mario Lanza's achievements in his short life is admirable, this concert is really only for die hard Vincent fans. ---Jade Kops, broadwayworld.com

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