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Italian Journale MY Paesano

Our Musica La Voce di Vita feature continues, this time featuring Italian American, Lawrence Branchetti...
Interviewed by Denyse Bridger

Lawrence Branchetti was born of Italian decent in the quaint town of Aliquippa, just outside of Pittsburgh. Noted for it's great sports figures and musicians, Aliquippa has produced legends such as Mike Ditka, Tony Dorsett, Henry Mancini and... Branchetti recently was included in that list of famous people.

Branchetti's passion and love for music started at the very young age of 8, As a young boy, Branchetti was greatly influenced musically by his loving parents, who always listened to great performers such as Sinatra, Martin, Bennett, Billy Eckstine, Nat King Cole, and others. This early influence began to shape Branchetti's musical career.

Branchetti's courage, intensity and involvement with his music, and singing has become his trade mark. He performs songs that fit his emotional states, and because of his concern with communicating he brings and gives new stature to lyrics, rhyme and phrasing, with an expressive interplay of words and notes than any performer of present day. Branchetti's multi-octave voice leaves audiences in wow!!!! the Miami Herald stated recently *"Branchetti has the same snap, crackle and pizzazz as our ol'e beloved Blue Eyes."*

Lawrence Branchetti has been recognized not only Nationally, but also Internationally as one of the top performers in the Entertainment field today. He has been highly praised for his vocal style, and ability to please audiences all over the world, Branchetti has performed in Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Venezuela, and Italy, with over 150 songs recorded to date, Mr. Branchetti is featured on 1200 radio stations around the country and world.

You can find Lawrence Branchetti on the "I Am An Italian" Facebook page along with other famous singers such as Tony Bennett, Andrea Bocelli, Bobby Darin, Mario Lanza, Luciano Pavarotti and Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin.

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Mr. Branchetti has been gracious enough to grant us a brief interview for this piece, as well, and we chatted about various things pertaining to both his professional life and his personal views on what he does.

I asked him about the honor of being chosen to "represent" the immortal Frank Sinatra, and how he felt to be given such a trust. "Yes, its true about the endorsement of carrying on the Proud tradition and sound of Frank Sinatra, but I always have handled that endorsement with up most respect to Sinatra, and Italian American Organizations, I have never used it or have taken advantage of this gracious honor given to me.

"However, the era that I enjoy really performing is the 60's when Frank was performing with Count Basie, the arrangements he had in the 60's were outstanding. As an example Where Or When, Get me to the Church on Time, Don't worry about me, More, Fly Me to the Moon, finally, You make me feel so young, the list goes on and on. Actually I have in my song book over 1000 songs that I sing of Sinatra and Martin."

When I inquired about his favorite songs, the answer was again one of genuine enthusiasm and love of the music he is known for. "Some of my favorites are Lady is a Tramp, I've got the world on a string, Nice and Easy, Come Fly With Me, etc.

"I believe I am probably one of the few crooners left that can really perform the Standard Bar songs, which is something you had to experience, or gone through in your personal life. Like, One for My Baby, Angel Eyes, Drinking again etc. The only entertainer I know of today other than myself is Tony Bennett performing these numbers, with emotion and feeling, they need to be delivered from the heart, they are expressive songs in nature."

We reflected on memorable moments in an already expansive career, and Mr. Branchetti has this to reveal about his professional experiences. *"There have been several memorable experiences in my career, but the most memorable one, was the concert for 9-11, the Military and fire departments were all there, and the house was*

packed not a seat was left. During that concert the Mayor and Fire Chief of New York, were thanking us for our support over the PA system, it was chilling and heartbreaking at the same time. All the monies made at that concert were donated directly the next day in New York to the Fire Chief of Engine Co. 22-Ladder for the 13 fallen Firemen that gave their lives."

Also ranking high in the memorable moments was the "Italian American Festival in Syracuse, there were thousands of people that attended this festival, trust me the weather was freezing, and coming from Florida I was still determined to perform at my best level. After that show, the people rushed the stage asking for autographs, CD's anything they could get there hands on, it was truly an amazing experience, One Lady said I want your autograph, but I don't have any paper available, could you write your name on my forearm, but I said, its going to come off when you take a shower, she said don't worry, I will use saran wrap and cover it.... Just a funny story!!!"

Then we spoke about the dream gig – the one show all performers like to think they might someday give, and Mr. Branchetti had this to say: *"I think of a dream gig for me would be on tour traveling around Europe performing in Italy, London, Germany, France, at that point I would be satisfied, that dream may not be to far away, recently I have been receiving a lot of press from World News around Europe and articles out of Italy which talked about Sinatra, Damone Martin and Branchetti."* I suspect this dream is entirely possible for this versatile and talented man.

We then spoke about the audience – the people all performers speak to with their art. I asked him if he enjoyed his audience, and no surprise, he likes them a lot! *"Yes Denyse, I enjoy immensely interacting with my audience, I believe its important, it shows your other side of your personality. Being able to sing, was a gift given to me, my desire is to make people happy. and enjoy the time they spend with me entertaining them."*

This led me to ask if there was ever a time when the admiration became intrusive into his personal life, and he was gracious enough to reply: *"Denyse, as an Entertainer/Singer, I never let adulation of women interfere with my family life, as a single parent that has raised 3 children alone, I was always taught by my loving Italian Parents to respect and love your family, Singing is a love not to be used meeting women, I treat and greet everyone with the same respect. It is my desire to truly set a good example as an Italian American."* I'd say he was doing that very effectively, with the charm and respect that is a trademark of the Italian man.

We then spoke of the future and what might lie ahead. *"As far as what lies ahead for me in terms of my career, even though times are changing, I must keep active on National and International radio shows, which is great exposure, plus continuing on with shows and concerts. To date I have recorded over 100 songs, its important for me to continue with that also. to give new material for the radio stations to use."*

Mr. Branchetti then made a small request of me for this article, so once again, in his words:

"Denyse, I developed an Italian Program while I was in the Abruzzo region of Italy this summer with some of my close Italian friends. It's called THE ITALIAN IMMIGRANT CEREMONIAL JOURNEY, and its been endorsed by the NIAF as an affiliated program.

*(*Ed. Note: For complete details, check Mr. Branchetti's official website.) Listed below is the Link. We have had an excellent response on this program, since there are not many tours or information on the areas we cover, Italian Americans are interested in learning more about there relatives and family and our select personnel speak fluent English for translations and private guide service.*

<http://www.branchetti.com/italian-immigrants-ceremonies.html>

This is the only program of its kind and honors our Italian Fathers that gave so much to give our lives we have today.

To learn more about Mr. Branchetti, and listen to his wonderful music, please visit his website, relax and enjoy the music, and perhaps drop him a note and tell how much you've enjoyed his special sound. You may contact Lawrence Branchetti directly via email: lizprod@aol.com, or through his personal website at: www.branchetti.com

Our sincere thanks to Mr. Branchetti for his time and talent.