

Tony Lovello Concert

June 22, 2008

Of all the concerts offered at Harrington ARTS Center, Tony Lovello's performance ranks among the top three, in my opinion! That's saying a lot!

For one hour, this energetic man created entertainment par excellence from pop tunes, old standards, and even some themes from serious music repertory. Among the pieces for which he is famous is "Twilight Time," a favorite since his time with the "Three Suns." Can you imagine—the music is even better played solo by Tony! Another of his signature pieces is "Malaguena," artistically and tastefully arranged to become a new entity. Tony's sense of what is appropriate is evidenced in each of his great versions: a perfect balance between melody and accompaniment features, inventive rhythms newly applied, dynamic emotional range, and just the right amount of showy stuff of audience-stimulating appeal.

Tony is without doubt the most generous artist I've ever experienced. He gave away CD after CD to folks picked from the audience for their attention or ability to respond to questions. Playing at floor level—walking around at eye-to-eye level—he related with individuals and the group. It was an enthralling time.

Famous for his bellows shakes, Tony generously demonstrated with explanations. Some folks were observed in "dry" imitation with imaginary accordions. While exclusively shaking doubles, Tony's subtle manipulations define rhythms using accents and dynamic levels such as this writer has never heard controlled by others. The bellows moved in perfect vibrations for long sections of music. Reinforced by his "secret" energy food, he managed five-and-a-half-minutes (in the case of "Malaguena") with seemingly little effort! Well, not entirely. Tony was drenched at conclusion of the concert.

This was more than an entertaining hour. It became a glimpse into the heart of a man of music, a real person who expresses a spiritual relationship within himself to the outside world. All performers give the gift of self in performance, but Tony offers more of himself than would be necessary considering the irresistibility of his skills. Among them is the accomplishment of finger-tremolos that give heart-stopping significance to moments that make the music unforgettably inspired. Tony Lovello is indeed an interpretive master who justified the 800-mile travel by some members of the audience. And he deserved each of the several standing ovations offered in recognition.

I wouldn't be surprised if every person in the concert hall walked out wishing he/she could play like that, perhaps going home to put on the accordion and try. That form of inspiration is a real gift to the listeners, and is also great praise to the performer.

Helmi Strahl Harrington, Ph.D.