

Ed Romero

Biography

When I was a young man in Argentina, I was introduced to the Great American Songbook, which was the popular music of that era in America, though not in Argentina. I was very attracted to this music and sought it out wherever I could. My first exposure to the vocalists and songs of this wonderful music came a few years later when a friend of mine brought back some albums that he got during a trip to the United States. I heard the first few bars of a song and suddenly felt that I had discovered something new.

I didn't know it at the time but I was listening to Frank Sinatra singing a song written by Cole Porter and accompanied by Nelson Riddle in what was later become one of his most iconic orchestrations. The song was "I've Got You Under My Skin" – How can anybody resist three giants like Sinatra, Porter and Riddle and not fall in love with this kind of music!

I was fortunate that I knew some English so I could understand most of the song, because I suddenly felt this urge to sing only American Music.

Given that Argentina has been often described as "a country full of Italians who speak Spanish" my desire to sing songs most people didn't know in a language they would not understand was not exactly an auspicious beginning but, then again, nobody has ever accused me of being a marketing genius.

However, I still managed to get invited to sing at some of the very few jazz clubs that were available in the mid 1960's, and I knew right then and there that this music would become part of my life.

The photograph on the back cover of my latest CD, entitled "I've Gotta Be Me," shows me at my very first public appearance in the City of Cordoba, Argentina in 1966. I feel compelled to explain that the young man in the photograph is neither my son nor my grandson...It is just ME only forty seven years ago – Have I changed that much ? – Really ?

After a few years, in 1968, I decided to move to the United States to follow my dream. Sometimes there is a certain blessing in not knowing how much one doesn't know so I came really believing that I was "ready" and totally unaware that I was merely starting a long and arduous learning process...but it was really exciting.

The first thing I did was buy every album I could get my hands on and attend every show I could. Fortunately, at that time the vocalists singing the great American standards were the stars of the moment. I remember a few days after landing at LAX I was at the Greek Theatre listening to Jack Jones with the Buddy Rich Band...I thought to myself "This is Heaven and I am in it."

Since then, from time to time, I allowed circumstances to take me away from performing and drive me into the well-known trap called Corporate America. However, there was never a moment when my love for the music was not the strongest presence in my life. And that love has led me to follow my heart and make "I've Gotta Be Me."

Many years ago, when I first started singing in Argentina, a very old timer tango singer under the effects of some good Chianti, gave me some sound advice – Kid (Yes ... I WAS a kid at the time) if you want to sing you need to learn two things: First: Get the best musicians you can find and Second: Stay out of the way and don't muck things up. (He actually used a different word instead of muck.)

I am happy to say, I have been very successful with the first part – I am still working and getting better on the second one.

When people have comments about the great musicians I have on my latest CD they always mentioned that I should be proud of them.

To this I respond: More than proud, what I feel is extremely grateful.

Andy, Steve, Karl and Doug are geniuses, and each one brings a life of musical experience and talent.

Andy Howe has been my musical director for the last ten years and, in addition to playing wonderful piano and directing, he has written some of the best arrangements I have. He has an uncanny ability to understand in very few words, what I want to achieve with a song and what mood needs to be set and come up with the most beautiful and creative orchestrations.

For these reasons, I still count within my repertoire songs like "I've Gotta Be Me," "The Impossible Dream (The Quest)," and most recently "Here's to Life." All of them about celebrating what life is really about and being honest to one's true self.