

National Italian American Foundation Honoree

## **Tony Renis**

NIAF Lifetime Achievement Award in Entertainment

Tony Renis' career stretches across five decades, beginning in the early '60s when this native of Milan burst into the spotlight with a timeless recording of his original song "Tenerezza," a major hit across Europe. In 1962, he dazzled the world at the prestigious Sanremo Music Festival with the irresistible and melodic magic of "Quando, Quando, Quando" — a song became a symbol of Italian music worldwide.

That paved the way for a long string of Renis classics, including "Uno Per Tutte" and "Le Ciliegie," which established him as a major star in South America. By the mid-'60s, he added "movie star" to his resume, with leading roles in several popular Italian films. He continued his musical accomplishments with hits such as "I Sorrisi Di Sera," "Nessun'altra Che Te" and "Quando Dico Che Ti Amo."

In 1968, he teamed with Domenico Modugno on "Il Posto Mio," another global hit. His smash "Frin Frin Frin" became the theme song of the popular Italian TV series "Inspector Maigret." And, in the '70s, his classic original, "Grande Grande Grande" was recorded by Italian superstar Mina, as well as Shirley Bassey, Vikki Carr and Mireille Mathieu. Meanwhile, he was composing hit film soundtracks, landing the coveted Nastro D'argento for the film "Blu Gang." His major hit "Un Uomo Tra La Folla" was recorded in English as chart-topping hits by Perry Como and Placido Domingo.

At the height of his career, Renis stepped back from the spotlight to focus on songwriting and producing. In 1980, he discovered Nikka Costa, daughter of Frank Sinatra's arranger/producer Don Costa, and co-produced her album "Nikka Costa," earning a "Telegatto" for Producer of the Year. Renis also began a long-term collaboration with Julio Iglesias, co-writing "De Niña A Mujer," "Momentos" and "All of You" — a smash duet for Iglesias and Diana Ross — and co-produced tracks for Iglesias' 1988 album "Non Stop."

The '90s marked a period of personal and professional triumph for Renis, with his marriage to Elettra Morini, prima ballerina etoile of the Teatro Alla Scala of Milano, and his dedication to UNICEF. Renis also co-produced "I Hate You Then I Love You," the once-in-a-lifetime duet by Celine Dion and Luciano Pavarotti, and was the impetus behind the Italian version of "Still In Love" ("Amo, T'amo, Ti Amo"), a huge hit in Italy for Lionel Richie.

In 1998, Renis co-wrote and co-produced "The Prayer," a track from "Quest For Camelot" that became a hit for Andrea Bocelli and Celine Dion that won a 1999 Golden Globe, an Oscar nomination and a BMI Music Award.

At 2000's Sanremo Music Festival, Renis was honored with the first ever "Lifetime Achievement Award" for his contribution to the success of Italian music worldwide. In 2001, he co-wrote "Se La Gente Usasse Il Cuore," which was recorded by Andrea Bocelli and became the Telegatto Award-winning title song of Italy's TV soap "Cuore." And, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs named him "Ambassador of Italian Music in the World."

Named by RAI the Artistic Director of the Sanremo Music Festival, Renis went on to compose "Merry Christmas in Love," title track of the film "Christmas In Love," for which he won numerous awards. The Roma Film Festival honored him that year with the Federico Fellini 2005 Lifetime Achievement Award.

In 2006, the Hollywood Foreign Press Association nominated Renis for "Merry Christmas In Love" for a Golden Globe, and the worldwide release of one of Renis' most cherished projects, Andrea Bocelli's "Amore," featuring Christina Aguilera and Stevie Wonder. A year later, Renis co-produced tracks for "The Best of Andrea Bocelli: Vivere."

In 2009, Renis created Il Volo. Under his expert guidance, the three youngsters, Piero Barone, Ignazio Boschetto and Gianluca Ginoble, made a significant impact on the music industry and brought a new generation to Italy's classics.

With a catalogue of smash international hits and one of the most popular songs of our time, "Quando, Quando, Quando," Tony Renis is a singer, composer and producer whose extraordinary creative gifts have made him a living treasure — not only in his native Italy, but among music lovers around the world.