

# under the sun



he found his heart  
at Mohegan Sun

By Louis R. Carlozo

Legendary crooner Tony Bennett shares the secrets of his success

**Q&A** In show business, the word “longevity” gets thrown around too easily: Survive to make a second album and you’re already something of a veteran. But at 82 years young, Tony Bennett puts any pretender to shame. No mere novelty act, the man born Anthony Benedetto is still in strong voice and winning over new fans with every encore. Not bad for a grocer’s son who first attracted attention as a 10-year-old, singing for New York Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia in 1936 at the opening of the Triborough Bridge.

*Legends* talked to Bennett about his longevity, his vitality and one particular venue he’s left his heart in (besides San Francisco, of course).

**This question never gets old, because you continue to amaze people. How do you keep going?** You have to understand that without planning it, I’ve never really had to work for a living. I get to sing and I get to paint. I’m 82 years old and I have so much to learn, you would not believe it. Yet here I am, 82, and throughout the world it’s acknowledged that I’m as good as I’ve ever been. I keep studying. I keep learning and the more cementing of knowledge, the better I get. Plus I exercise three times a week and play a lot of tennis.

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they’re my teachers.”

—Tony Bennett

**Does it seem strange to you that you continue to attract fans as young as a quarter of your age?** Not really. I was always against singing to the demographics, for just one age group. If you do something like Walt Disney or Charlie Chaplin did—appealing to all age groups—it’s a much bigger audience. So I told my son [in 1994] that I liked MTV because they used three-minute videos to promote an artist. They said they wanted to do an “Unplugged” concert. And that changed everything. [*MTV Unplugged: Tony Bennett won a Grammy for Album of the Year.*]

**As you’ve continued to perform, has your relationship with the audience changed over time?** Absolutely. I [perform] live all the time; and they don’t know it, but the audiences, they’re my teachers. They tell me what’s medium, what’s hot, what goes over big by their applause. They show me what they like and how they want me to go on with the show.

**You’re coming back to Mohegan Sun for a show, and you’re no stranger to the place. Tell us about that.** I love it. I’ve performed there many times and it’s always very successful. They have me play for the high rollers, and they really do well. I’ve never been treated better; it’s very, very nice and the people are right on the ball. They know what they’re doing, it’s just a natural. It’s one of the best facilities I’ve ever played.

**We’d feel silly asking this of anyone else, but please tell us: What do you think it will be like singing for audiences when you’re 90?** I hope it’ll be the same: regular audiences, different ages. But if I’m not singing well, I’m not going to come out there. The audience may not notice it, but I’ll know if there’s too much warble in my voice. Then I’ll phase out and I’ll go into painting, which I’ve done all my life.

*Tony Bennett will take the stage at Mohegan Sun Arena this winter exclusively for qualified Player’s Club members. For more information, visit [mohegansun.com](http://mohegansun.com)*



Tony Bennett was a special guest at Billy Joel’s two-night farewell concert to New York’s Shea Stadium (top), performing “New York State of Mind” with Joel on the center-field stage to the packed stands in July 2008. Bennett at The Cabaret Theatre in 2006.