



SAN FRANCISCO

by Richard Connema

Franc D'Ambrosio Goes Hollywood

The very talented Broadway singer Franc D'Ambrosio is debuting ... *Franc D'Ambrosio's Hollywood* at the Empire Plush Room in the historic York Hotel, 940 Sutter Street, San Francisco through April 1st. The gifted singer is doing a truncated version of the two-act show he will be taking on the road to other cities.

Franc D'Ambrosio's second home is in San Francisco, where he haunted the Curran Theatre for five years as the Phantom and performed the role in over 2600 performances over a six-year period. The son of a Bronx baker commands the stage with his laid back personality. He has an astounding range in his vital voice and can change pace at a moment's notice, from crooning ballads to operatic arias. This Italian singer of song looks so much like a young Marlon Brando that you feel he will yell out "Stella!"

Backed by excellent pianist Chuck Larkin, Franc opens singing Johnny Burke and Arthur Johnson's "Pennies from Heaven" and segues into Irving Berlin's "Cheek to Cheek." He talks about his upbringing in the Bronx where he would watch Hollywood musicals on the family's 14-inch black and white TV set wishing he could work in one of the "dream studios." He goes into MGM's signature tunes, "Singin' in the Rain," and completely takes another route with his dynamic voice in a slight rendition of the aria from *Rigoletto*, "La Donna e Mobile" from a Mario Lanza MGM film. He is terrific in the Abe Reynolds/John Boswell nostalgic song "Remember the Line," which features famous lines from Hollywood films.

Franc D'Ambrosio has no difficulty with lower octaves. He changes to amiably spun tenor notes without hesitation. He is great in his renditions of Rodgers and Hammerstein's "Some Enchanted Evening" and Sammy Cahn and Nicholas Brodsky's "Be My Love" from the Mario Lanza film *The Toast of New Orleans*. He can croon a great song like Johnny Mercer and Henry Mancini's "Moon River" or Harry Warren and Jack Brooks' "That's Amore."

This capable artist tackles a Jolson medley saluting Warner Brothers' first sound film. The set includes "Rockabye Your Baby," "Swanee" and the ever popular "Mammy." He does these swinging numbers in an inimitable style that is his own. He even sings Richard and Robert Sherman's "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang" in Italian. His voice is very melodic in the love song he sang in *Godfather 3*. Franc attempts the impossible by singing snippets of songs that Fred Astaire sang in his many films. He sings eleven songs in rapid time (which probably could be cut down to make it more melodic).

The audience would not have forgiven him if he had not sung "Music of the Night" from *The Phantom of the Opera*, and he does not let his fans down. Once again his powerful voice moves the audience to remember his playing the Phantom. Franc ends his 70-or-so minute session with a soft arrangement of "Danny Boy."

Franc D'Ambrosio will play at the Empire Plush Room 940 Sutter Street, San Francisco through April 1. For tickets please call 866-468-3399. Coming up next is Lypsinka! in *The Passion of the Crawford* opening April 3rd through April 22nd.