

# “BRAVO BONO”

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A recent review on Dennis Bono's new CD "Thinking of When" by Rob Lester in Talkin Broadway Review, New York, NY

Starting off with an impressive pow and a blast,



with Cole Porter's "Just One of Those Things" and continuing through a thoughtful reading of Harry Warren/ Mack Gordon's "There Will Never Be Another You" and other classics aced,

Dennis Bono continues to show what a pro he is on his latest album. His "If I Should Lose You" sparks with active, edgy feelings as he anticipates what things could feel like if that loss of a lover should happen.

**Equally terrific on swingers, ballads, and mid-tempo numbers, he's super and super-solid. "Old school" in the best sense of the word, he respects the mostly well-trod songs without things ever sounding stale and—hooray—he does not resort to gimmicks to keep things fresh. His aching, searing ballad readings of such numbers as "Drinkin' Again" and "I'm a Fool to Want You" echo with the bleakness of a tortured soul's intense loneliness and hopelessness. He sounds invested on everything, whether he's down and out or up and swinging.**

Dennis is a singer/ talk show host based in Las Vegas, but don't let the cliché image of a lounge lizard or brash, brassy presentation make you quiver with worry. He has the best aspects of energized performance and an aiming-to-entertain style and polish. Frank Sinatra is the mold and predecessor, and many Sinatra-associated songs are here: the aforementioned "I'm a Fool to Want You" (which he co-wrote), his first hit "All or Nothing At All," and "It Was a Very Good Year" (the least effective, it doesn't quite linger enough on the memories and perspective). However, Dennis doesn't

**copy the musical attack, stance, phrasing or trademarks of Sinatra, and his timbre is sufficiently different. At times, he reminds me more of the tender phrasing of Jack Jones and others. Many have attempted and stumbled in an attempt to emulate and carry the torch of the Sinatra era of singers, but Dennis Bono can do it. He shows the intelligence and panache and sense of self others can only manage to get a suggestion of.**

Aided by arrangements and playing that is musically professional and etched with real insight, the vocalist's interpretations burn or soar. The Bob Rozario Jazz Ensemble, named for its very-much-worth-listening-to and non-showy pianist, is consistently on its game. Prominent in the mix, Bob Sachs on bass becomes the throbbing heartbeat—not just *keeping* the beat—of these heartfelt songs. There's more heart with Dave Hart on guitars (he occasionally takes out a harmonica for good effect) and Mike Mechem is the fine drummer. There are guests playing sax, brass and percussion for variety and well-chosen accents. They all are on the same page, supporting, enriching and illuminating the material.

**The whole album stands up to repeat plays: intriguing at first and revealing newly-appreciated nuances of phrasing and shading each time. Things feel in the moment, the occasional more rough and raw, less pristine note adding color and grit. Dennis makes me believe in him as he projects that he believes in himself as a singer or when he presents the guy who believes in himself from that bathroom mirror scene leading to "I Believe in You" from *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*. He succeeds, and there's nothing trying or trying-too-hard about this swell album. BRAVO, BONO!**