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Great arrangement: **JORGE CALANDRELLI** conducts a session for Tony Bennett in New York. Inset: A young Calandrelli at work at CBS Records in Buenos Aires.



Keeping Score

Jorge Calandrelli: Celebrating A Master Of Musical Versatility

BY CRAIG ROSEN

Maestro—it's a title of respect for a master musician. Perhaps no one is more deserving of it than composer, arranger and producer Jorge Calandrelli. During his three-decade career, he has worked with a diverse collection of artists ranging from Tony Bennett, Arturo Sandoval and Yo-Yo Ma to Dixie Chicks, Elton John and John Legend. And his work has been heard in films, including "The Color Purple," "Tron" and "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon."

His excellence has certainly been recognized. Calandrelli is a five-time Grammy Award winner who's earned 26 total nominations, along with two Academy Award nominations. His most recent achievement: a Grammy nomination for best instrumental arrangement accompany-

ing vocalist(s) for his work on "Who Can I Turn To (When Nobody Needs Me)" by Bennett and Queen Latifah from Bennett's *Duets II* album.

Calandrelli arranged and conducted the strings on the album, which debuted atop the Billboard 200 following its release in September with first-week sales of 179,000, according to Nielsen SoundScan, making Bennett the oldest living artist to debut at No. 1. The album's success was fitting, as it marked the 25th anniversary of Calandrelli's work with Bennett over nine albums. *Duets II* has sold more than 550,000 copies, according to SoundScan.

He also worked on that album's prequel, 2006's *Duets: An American Classic*, which reached No. 3 on the Billboard 200, has sold 1.5 million albums (according to SoundScan) and earned Calandrelli a Grammy for best instrumental arrangement accompanying vocalist(s) for Bennett's duet remake with Stevie Wonder

of his "For Once in My Life."

"Jorge Calandrelli is a master arranger," Bennett says, "and it has been a pleasure to have worked with him on so many recordings throughout my career."

Barbra Streisand, who also has worked with Calandrelli, offers similar praise: "From the beginning of my career, I've had the good fortune to work with a select group of supremely gifted arrangers who each bring their unique sensibility to the music—Peter Matz, Don Costa, Johnny Mandel, Claus Ogerman and William Ross, to name a few—all musical geniuses, and Jorge Calandrelli is definitely a member of that exclusive club."

Noted producer Phil Ramone, who helmed both of Bennett's *Duets* sets, has worked with Calandrelli numerous times during the past 15 years. He says Calandrelli has a unique touch.

"He accompanies the songs the way they should be accompanied," Ramone, who has also worked with Calandrelli on some of Monica Mancini's albums, including 2009's *I've Loved These Days*, adds, "He has the sensitivity to stay out of the way of a singer, but at the same time gives you the warmth that he's capable of bringing. He's one of the best."

Calandrelli's success with Bennett booked him his 2010 triumph at the Latin Grammys, where he won producer of the year—along with Gregg Field—and best instrumental album for his work on Arturo Sandoval's *A Time for Love*. Sandoval is currently collaborating with Calandrelli on a new project, a tribute to legendary Mexican composer Armando Manzanero. Sandoval concurs with Ramone about Calandrelli's masterful knack for writing accompaniment with restraint.

"He writes just the right amount of music that never gets on top of the singer, but provides nice support to the soloist," Sandoval says. "That's a skill that really makes a difference."

Shelton Berg, dean of the University of Miami's Frost School of Music, co-arranged several selections on *A Time for Love* with Calandrelli. "Jorge's work doesn't scream at the audience, 'Hey, check me out,' with virtuosic and hip devices for their own sake," Berg says. "The listener is almost unaware, as Calandrelli's music exponentially amplifies the emotion and intent of the music."

Aside from his own work with Calandrelli, Sandoval is a fan of arrangements he's done for other artists, particularly his work on *The Five Seasons* by his friend and frequent collaborator Eddie Daniels, which earned Calandrelli a Grammy nomination in 1997 for best instrumental arrangement. Sandoval was especially

knocked out by the piece titled "The Fifth Season," based on "The Four Seasons" by Vivaldi. "That's a masterpiece that people are still talking about. That's when I knew that this guy had a special skill for writing."

Born in Argentina, Calandrelli's mother was a skilled pianist who played often in the family home. His father and grandfather, however, were both doctors and he was expected to follow suit, but he fell in love with music. He started playing piano by ear at age 4, and by 8, he began taking formal lessons. At first his father balked at the idea of his son pursuing music as a profession, but once he accepted it, he encouraged Calandrelli to dive headlong into music and learn everything he could. By his late teens and early

20s, he traveled to Europe and was immersed in jazz and bossa nova.

Gregg Field, a partner at Concord Music Group who co-produced *A Time for Love* with Calandrelli, notes that Calandrelli's Argentine roots and tango influence "give a romanticism to his writing."

Calandrelli went to Los Angeles in 1968, where he collaborated with noted arranger/composer Clare Fischer. He was amazed by watching one of his heroes perform with his big band and conduct recording sessions. And although he was impressed with Fischer's skill and the musicians he worked with, he realized he wasn't ready for the big time in the United States. Instead, Calandrelli returned to Argentina to hone his craft for a decade before returning stateside.

Upon his return to the States, armed with recommendation letters from the record companies he worked with in Argentina, Calandrelli had little trouble finding work, landing a gig recording Andre Kostelanetz and a 65-piece orchestra at CBS' New York studio.

While Calandrelli became a much in-demand arranger, it wasn't until 1981, with his first Grammy nomination—for best instrumental arrangement on Daniels' "Forget the Woman"—that he began to receive notice from the public at large. Five years later, he'd earn another Grammy nomination for the same song, this time for best instrumental arrangement accompanying vocalist(s) for Bennett's version of the tune.

Perhaps the greatest testament to Calandrelli's virtuosity is the diverse list of artists and genres he has worked with in his career. It's an exhaustive tally that features many of the biggest artists in pop, jazz, Latin and classical, including Barbra Streisand, Josh Groban, Quincy Jones, Michael Bublé, Elton John, Paul McCartney, Billy

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and the entire Megatrax team

Dear Jorge,
Congratulations for such
a well deserved tribute.

We love you,
te queremos,

Arturo y Marianela

'Creating A Dream'

Jorge Calandrelli Reflects On The Art Of Recording And A Musical Life

BY LEILA COBO

In the ocean of contemporary music, Jorge Calandrelli's music stands out like a sleek sailboat—elegant, finely tuned and unfailing in its sense of direction—whether it's navigating the waters of classical, pop, jazz,

Latin or R&B.

Indeed, if you've been listening to any music in the last 30 years, you've most certainly heard the sounds of Calandrelli. Whether it be his compositions, productions, arrangements or scores, he has made his mark across contemporary music, from Andrea Bocelli's *Vivere: Live in Tuscany* (which he arranged and conducted), to the score of "The Color Purple" (for which he composed and orchestrated two cues, earning an Academy Award nomination), to the closing-title song of "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" (which he composed, arranged and produced).

Calandrelli has worked with an array of artists, producers and composers, including Barbra Streisand, Wynton Marsalis, Plácido Domingo, Luis Miguel, Marc Anthony, Julio Iglesias, Paul McCartney and Quincy Jones. He has also amassed five Grammy Awards, 26 Grammy nominations and two Academy Award nominations. Most recently, the Argentine-born Calandrelli capped his 25-year association with Tony Bennett by arranging and conducting the orchestral arrangements of Bennett's *Duets II*, which debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard 200 last fall, and earning another Grammy nomination for arranging the duet by Bennett and Queen Latifah.

Here, Calandrelli reflects on his career with Billboard.

Is there a Jorge Calandrelli sound?

That's a very interesting question. My signature sound, especially when it comes to the recording industry, is precisely not to have a signature sound. If I were to do an album with an R&B artist, and another with a pop artist, and another with another artist and they all sound the same, I'm in trouble.

My signature is not to repeat myself and to create different sounds according to the project. My signature is being able to do so many different genres for so many different artists and each one of those be completely true to the style and to myself. And I write the best possible music within the parameters of that project.

I take a long time to do things. My theory is there's no such thing that classical music is better than pop or jazz is better than rock. For me a mediocre symphony is no better



Dynamic duo: ELTON JOHN greets JORGE CALANDRELLI in 2006 at Capitol Studios in Los Angeles, where John sang on Tony Bennett's album *Duets: An American Classic*.

than a good rock track. And I put a lot of time into what I do, and what I'm doing now is not something I've done before. Not even in film music do I use orchestrators. Everything from the very first to the very last note I do myself. That's why it takes such a long time.

So how do you approach a new project?

I listen to the song, and then I take my time, make some coffee, talk with friends, walk the dogs, listen to Bach and Ravel, and when I'm ready I sit down and it comes out naturally. I don't have to squeeze my mind. When I start I know exactly what I'm doing. It's as if somebody is dictating what notes to write. And it's all based on good taste and common sense.

You've been producing albums for three decades. Given the changes in the industry—including budgets—have you had to downsize the scope of your projects?

I'm one of the lucky musicians that still gets to work frequently and almost always with large orchestras. I've never really done synthesizer projects for budget reasons. I do use the technology to do a MIDI sequence for myself with all the best sounds, and then when I go to the sessions I already know how everything is going to sound.

In some cases, the artist wants to know what I'm doing, and with the technology we have now, we can do a preview of the arrangements, so we're all on the same page and there are no delays. I program the arrangement and assign to the musicians the library sounds that are available today, which are amazing. And many times—actually, it's interesting—after I record with a live orchestra, at the mixing process, we add to the mixing the synthesizer sounds. dub- **continued on >>p30**

*With much love to all who have and will
walk the path of music with me!...*

John Gaudreault



"NOSTALGIA" (Love Theme of 1940's) (Film Score)
(#1940's)

(A)

(B)

(C)

(2)

(Lento) *(Rit. Molto)*

N.Y. December 1982.

John Gaudreault

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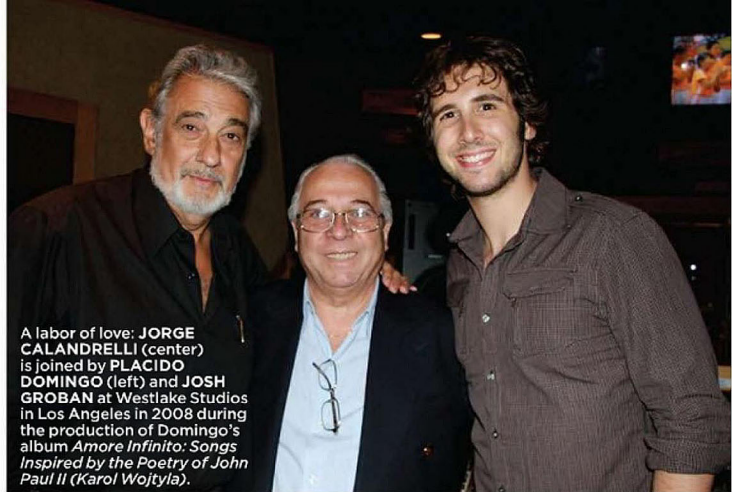
Congratulations, Jorge!

Mark and the staff of JoAnn Kane Music Service

To Jorge,

With love from your friend
and greatest admirer.

Johnny Mandel



A labor of love: JORGE CALANDRELLI (center) is joined by PLACIDO DOMINGO (left) and JOSH GROBAN at Westlake Studios in Los Angeles in 2008 during the production of Domingo's album *Amore Infinito: Songs Inspired by the Poetry of John Paul II* (Karol Wojtyła).

from >>p28 bing the orchestra, and even a little bit opens it up and makes it sound very contemporary. The orchestra, even if it's the best orchestra in the world, sounds like it could have been recorded in the '70s, but if you add these pads it brings it into the 21st century immediately.

Do the orchestra musicians worry you may replace them?

It's the other way around. I'm not replacing anything. I'm just adding to what they did. What they don't like is if, instead of hiring the 74-piece orchestra, we would do the thing with electronics. That would be terrible. Good artists like Barbra Streisand, Tony Bennett and Luis Miguel, they don't replace live musicians with synthesizers.

What does the orchestra bring to the recording that technology doesn't?

You cannot imitate a 50-piece string orchestra. Because when the musicians are playing among each other there's a magic that has to do, probably, with a technical and spiritual combination. There's a magic with the harmonics that when they play a note, each one plays a different note. You hear that chord and that chord is just gorgeous—there's no way you can imitate that, because every one of those players has years and years of experience, and all of them combined create this magical thing. You can enhance that, but you cannot imitate that. Impossible.

You've said in interviews that composer/arranger/pianist Clare Fisher was a big influence on you. Why him in particular?

When I met Clare Fisher I was 27 years old, and he came to Buenos Aires and I was very impressed with his beautiful harmonies. At that moment it was very important to me because I was more into jazz than commercial music. And in that sense it changed my harmonic concept and opened up a wide spectrum of possibilities. Later, when I started working more in pop and jazz and in conducting and arrangement, that remained forever [inside me], even though those harmonic concepts don't apply to everything. But everything is always there.

You are a pianist and have performed for years. Why did you go to the other side?

When I started, in my 20s, I went to Europe with a very good Brazilian trio. We toured Europe for three years, and that's when I realized that was not my life. I didn't want to be a pianist performing all my life. I wanted to be an arranger, a conductor, a composer. And I've conducted live a lot. But more than anything,

I enjoy being in the studio with the best possible musicians and recording.

Live performance is so imperfect. When we record an album we're almost creating a dream. It's like when a director does a movie with the perfect sound and the perfect pitch, and that's why it takes so long. When the project comes out people listen to it and go to a different place. And that's what we're doing: constructing a dream. If you do a live concert, it's a completely different emotion, but it's not perfect.

You're from Argentina, where you produced all of your early work. It's difficult as a Latin producer to cross over into the mainstream. What allowed you to do so?

My jazz roots are very good in the sense that the jazz musician is the musician of musicians. If you start with the Beatles, you're far more limited than if you start with Bill Evans or Miles Davis, which gives you a far wider range of possibilities.

After working the jazz scene I started working as a composer, arranger and producer in Argentina. And during the '70s I composed music for films, I did TV shows, I conducted. I had a lot of hit albums as a producer and arranger. I worked with the top Argentine pop artists, from A to Z. And when I came to the States I came with recommendations from all the labels—they wrote letters to CBS, to RCA—and when I got here, they immediately gave me huge projects.

Is there a "before and after" project for you?

One of the most important projects was the very first album I did with Tony Bennett, [1986's] *The Art of Excellence*, which I recorded in London. It was when Tony relaunched his career. That album was beautiful. Then I did the *Breakthrough* album for [clarinetist] Eddie Daniels for GRP. And [after that] I was contacted by a lot of people, even Quincy Jones, who contacted me to do "The Color Purple." Those three were very important moments that marked a before and after.

After that, some of the very important things were the symphonic series I did—[including] *Symphonic Tango*, *Symphonic Bossa Nova*—and the albums I did with Yo-Yo Ma, like *Obrigado Brazil*. Those were huge statements in a way. But every project has been important. Doing the Madonna/Ricky Martin duet ["Be Careful (Cuidado Con Mi Corazon)"] was very important too.

You have such a variety of scope. How do you approach such different projects?

Like a different **continued on >>p32**



Dear Jorge,

*A song never had a better friend than you.
Thank you so much for many years of your
beautiful arrangements.*

*With love,
Tony Bennett*



Congratulations, Jorge!

Your many friends and fans at Berklee College of Music are happy to join the chorus in singing your praises.

You richly deserve this honor, not only for your beautiful music, but also for providing generous and inspiring mentorship to our students as Berklee's Herb Alpert Visiting Scholar.

Gracias y saludos, maestro!

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from >>p30 language. In my mind I have different hard discs and according to the project I'm doing I probably go to that hard disc.

Has any project been a particularly difficult challenge?

Probably the three-movement concerto for clarinet and orchestra, which was on Eddie Daniels' *Breakthrough* album. It premiered in 1985, was recorded in 1986, and it's been [performed] all over the world for years. Last year they premiered it in Buenos Aires and as we speak they're playing it in the Czech Republic.

So you have this clarinet concert that you composed, and you've also composed pop songs and film themes. That's a pretty wide gamut.

Songwriting is another part of my thing. It's not my No. 1 priority, but I've been doing it all along. The very first of my songs that was recorded was "When Love Was All We Had," which Tony Bennett recorded in London. I did "Tu y Yo" with Luis Miguel, and I composed the end song for "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon." I composed two songs for Plácido Domingo for the album that I produced with lyrics by the Pope. On the Yo-Yo Ma tango album, I composed a song called "Tango Remembrances" where, using technology from today, I used some outtakes of [Argentine tango composer] Astor Piazzolla and I had Yo-Yo Ma play a duet with him. And they're

all completely different. If you put those songs together, you would never say the person who wrote them is the same person. That's part of the multifaceted personality I have.

When I was a kid I always played jazz and bossa nova, but my family loved classical music. When I came to the U.S., my main problem was no one knew if I was a jazz musician, a pop arranger or what. So I decided to keep on working in different styles, and [since] I was very successful in all of them, I kept getting called for completely different things. That's why I have in my brain little hard discs.

Given all this, what is still left undone?

In my spare time, which unfortunately is very limited, I'm finishing my piano concerto. I'm writing a serious, two-movement piano concerto called "Dyptic for Piano and Orchestra." It's very beautiful, very contemporary, very modern. That might be the Pulitzer Prize which I've never gotten so far. It takes a lot of time and I'm hoping to have it premiere in a couple of years.

The other thing is, I would like to write a memoir. And I have sketches of a book, because a lot of people ask me, "Maestro, why don't you write a book on arranging?" I could definitely do it. This is going to be kind of my legacy. I've found an enormous satisfaction giving these master classes. Then you feel like everything you know you're passing to them.

from >>p27 Joel, Sting, Elvis Costello, Tim McGraw, Barry Manilow, Dave Grusin, Ella Fitzgerald, Regina Carter, Al Jarreau, Julio Iglesias, Shakira and the London Symphony Orchestra. In fact, two of Calandrelli's Grammy wins were in the best classical crossover album category, for Yo-Yo Ma's *Obrigado Brazil* in 2003 and for his collaboration tribute with Ma on *Soul of the Tango—The Music of Astor Piazzolla* in 1998.

Concord's Field says, "What makes Jorge so effective as an arranger and producer is his incredible musicality across many genres and his intuitive way of finding exactly the right musical frame for the artists he works with. Jorge is unique in being equally at home with Tony Bennett or Celine Dion as he is with Yo-Yo Ma or Plácido Domingo. He creates definitive arrangements for artists much like Nelson Riddle or Don Costa did for [Frank] Sinatra."

He also isn't afraid to take on the challenge of reworking iconic material. In 2007, Calandrelli co-produced, arranged and played piano on *Love Letters From Ella*, in celebration of what would have been Fitzgerald's 90th birthday. The collection of outtakes and virtual collaborations included a version of "Cry Me a River," which stunned co-producer Field, who also engineered, mixed and played drums on the set.

"It was an unusual challenge to write to an existing track, especially with an artist as iconic as Ella," Field says. "It was a minefield of challenges to write the arrangement to be contemporary and still make sense with Ella's vocal. Jorge nailed it."

Calandrelli has the rare talent of adapting to material he's unfamiliar with and some-

how improving it. Monica Mancini recalls that such was the case when Calandrelli worked on her 2010 album *I Love These Days*.

"It was a collection of '60s and '70s pop and rock covers, which was not necessarily Jorge's world, but he came into it not knowing Jackson Browne's 'These Days,' and he made this little tweak to the arrangement that is so current. He has a way of taking what you think is a great piece of music and making it a little nicer."

Apart from his work as producer, arranger and composer, Calandrelli served as executive music director of Concord Music Group from 2006 to 2010. Field notes that Calandrelli had been involved in a number of the label's releases as an arranger and producer, and it made sense to have him play a greater role at the label based on his musical expertise by developing new artists and projects.

Although he no longer holds that title with Concord, he continues to be involved in projects for the label and has developed lasting friendships with such executives as Field and artists like Mancini.

In fact, one of Calandrelli's best features may be his easygoing personality. "He's a lot of fun to be around," Mancini says. "He loves to eat and drink good wine. He loves nature and traveling. We're sympatico across the board."

His personality also works well in the studio: "He has a good sense of humor and he has patience," Ramone says. "Not everything works right away, but he's always positive and very sensitive to the mix and enjoys hearing his work. He doesn't just finish the arrangement and disappear. When you get a note from Jorge, you pay attention."