



## James Tormé to celebrate the 'greats' in Cabaret show

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[The Indianapolis 500](#) is of special interest to [James Tormé](#), son of legendary entertainer [Mel Tormé](#), because he not only inherited his dad's musical gifts but also his love for racing. In fact, if there's time, Tormé hopes he can fit in a visit to the track while he is in Indy making his [Cabaret at the Columbia Club](#) debut in "James Tormé in Love for Sale" on Thursday, May 15, and Friday, May 16, at 8 p.m.

Recently [Examiner.com](#) spoke by phone with Tormé, who was calling from his Sherman Oaks, Calif., home. The information about his dad's interest in racing came up when he was asked if he had ever played Indianapolis. "My career in some ways is like a lunar expedition, a sort of Mercury Mission, of that environment that my father, before me, spent a lot of time in.

"When I was a kid I was always hearing him talk about these mythical towns like Cincinnati, Boston and Indianapolis. He was always arriving back from places like that and now I am seeing them for the first time which is sort of surreal and a lot of fun," said Tormé. But the fact is, according to Tormé, he not only has relatives here, his dad spent part of his childhood in Indy which is where his lifelong passion for racing and the 500 became a family tradition.

The foremost Tormé family tradition, however, is music, and as heir to his father's renowned legacy, his 40-year old son has come into his own as one of his generation's most heralded young jazz vocalists. So far his gigs have included performances with the BBC Concert Orchestra, Ronnie Scott's Orchestra and Les Paul Trio, and his 2011 debut album "Love for Sale" topped both the iTunes and Amazon Jazz Charts.

Tormé is celebrated for giving older classics a contemporary spin and infusing newer songs with timeless throwback styling. When asked what accounts for his ability to do that, he said, "Dad was influenced by music from about 1929-1949 and I was sort of force fed all of that and of course everything else that has come out since then so it is a much wider well from which to draw.

"There is only so much you can do to get away from the genetic manifestation of who you are. I know there is a lot of my father in my texture, my musicality and my singing, even, but those different influences also make me a different singer. I love to reinvent things because it is a challenge to do a fresh version of something and really make it new. I actually learned that from my dad, who would do his own versions of certain, very specific,

contemporary tunes. I like being a song stylist. It all comes down to the vocal interpretation but also the arrangement.”

Tormé is also the son of British actress [Janette Scott](#) and grandson of [Dame Thora Hird](#), also an actress. Despite having inherited such a storied show business pedigree, he has clearly managed to establish his own identity. “Having grown up around my father and all his entertainer friends, I am very demystified about it all. It’s never anything I have shied away from in terms of the legacy I come from. I am very proud of it.

“I knew from a young age, however, that I would be able to offer something on an equal footing in terms of quality, something that would be tantamount, in terms of its level, to what my father was doing. If I didn’t feel that way maybe I would feel differently doing what I do. I don’t think I would do it if I felt that it was really a stretch. It hasn’t been intimidating for me and not something I have a chip on my shoulder about. If anything, it’s something I like to shout from the rooftops.”

According to Tormé, his father was his biggest influence, but there were others. “My father’s life long affair with music is what inspired mine. My father was sending me music when I was in boarding school in the U.K. (he lived there from the ages of 7-19). Music was used to keep us together so to speak. He really inspired my career in so many ways. I have other influences like [June Christy](#), [Chris Connor](#), [Nat King Cole](#), [Ray Charles](#), [Carmen McRae](#). Those would be my main influences. But being at his performances, year after year at Carnegie Hall and the Hollywood Bowl, places like that you just couldn’t help but absorb a lot of what was happening both onstage and offstage.”

As far as Tormé’s show, for which he will be accompanied by an all-star trio of musicians, including [Niko Syropoulos](#) on piano, [Ryan Cross](#) on bass, and [Dan Schnelle](#) on drums, he said that he has created it specifically for his Cabaret appearances. He was recently on a sold out U.K. tour where he did a show called “Tormé Meets the British, Part II.” He will combine elements of that show with contents of another show he performed which paid tribute to the 75th Anniversary of [Blue Note Records](#), the renowned jazz label.

The singer also said he show will encapsulate his story and his parents. His mother, Janette Scott, met his father in 1965 in a club called the Cool Elephant in London. She had been living with journalist [David Frost](#) at the time but that night, according to Tormé, his father stole his mother from Frost. Scott was a British actress who appeared in some 70 films.

Tormé said the show was originally going to be about his influences but it ended up turning into a bio about his past, present, and future. He also said the audience can expect to hear about what it was like growing up in his family to things he is experiencing now on the road, and in the music scene and his plans for a show he is taking to Paris.

Tormé said another name for his show is “Celebrating the Greats” because some of the songs performed will honor the likes of [Cole Porter](#), [Duke Ellington](#), [Ray Charles](#), [Ella Fitzgerald](#), [Peggy Lee](#), [Fred Astaire](#), and his father.

After experiencing his show, Tormé hopes those attending “leave with a good feeling, knowing they just saw something different than they have ever seen. People come up to me after shows and say ‘I feel like I just went to church or temple. I feel like I just did something good for myself.’ I can offer a key into some different rooms that nobody has been able to go into for a long time.”

For tickets and information about “James Tormé in Love for Sale” call (317) 275-1169 or visit [www.thecabaret.org](http://www.thecabaret.org).

