A MIDDLETOWN ITALIAN-AMERICAN

IN

SHOW BUSINESS

TONY PASTOR

1909 - 1969

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10/1/80
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer would like to thank Professor Salvatore J. LaGumina, my faculty advisor, for his advice, encouragement, and patience throughout this project (and especially for our numerous letters back and forth).

Also, I would like to extend special thanks to the family members of Tony Pastor, who made this learning experience possible, for their cooperation and interest. I would like to acknowledge in particular, Dorothy Pastor, Guy Pastor, Tony Pastor, Jr., John Pastor, Josephine Saraceno, James Pestrutto, Rose Tommasi, and Dr. Vincent J. Vinci for their time, willing participation, personal reflections, and insights.
PREFACE

This retrospective historical account of Tony Pastor touches on a few highlights of this famous bandleader's career. Much of the factual material used was compiled from oral histories provided by personal interviews with immediate family members. Although not a complete chronicle, this paper attempts to illustrate the effect his ethnic background had on his life, his growth, and the development of his musical career.
BACKGROUND

AND

FAMILY HISTORY
TONY PASTOR - 1907-1969
A MIDDLETOWN ITALIAN-AMERICAN IN SHOW BUSINESS

Middletown, Connecticut is a special place. Today it is a mid-size Connecticut city of approximately 40,000 residents. Many of these residents are Italian-Americans who have roots in a small Sicilian town called Melilli. Current estimates place the percentage of Middletown citizens with Italian heritage at around sixty percent.

Researching local records indicates that one of the first Italian immigrants was named Angelo V. Magnano. The data places him in Middletown around 1868. Many other persons of Italian decent emigrated to Middletown (especially from Melilli, Sicily) in the following years and their talents, professions, and skills were brought with them.

One such group of immigrants included members of the Vinci family. The Vinci's also stemmed from Melilli. In the early 1900's, times were tough in Italy and Vincenzo Vinci came to the United States to make a new life. His brother Sebastiano was also in Middletown about this time (1909) and they worked for about two years before returning to their homeland. Vincenzo worked at the New England Enamel Factory on River Road and passed the word along to other relatives that the booming, manufacturing and industrial river city of Middletown offered many job opportunities. Other local industries at that time included the Goodyear Rubber Co., Palmer Mills, Russell Co., Douglas Pump, various textile mills, and Wilcox & Crittenden Co.
In Melilli, Vincenzo Vinci married Josephina Milardo and had eight children, four boys, four girls. Their names were Sebastiano, Salvatore, Carmelina, Emanuella, Joseph, Angelo, Sebastiana, and Vincenza. Because of their father's experiences, these children travelled to and settled in Middletown, Connecticut. All but two, Sebastiana and Vincenza, came to the United States. Sebastiano stayed for a short time, but returned, mainly because he did not like the cold weather of New England.

Six of Vincenzo and Josephina's children came to the United States to make a better life for themselves. All six came to Middletown and married there. This study concerns itself with one of the American-born offspring from this family.

In Middletown on January 19, 1907 Carmelina Vinci married Gaetano Pestritto, also from the Melilli area. They had a family of six children: Anthony, Josephine, James, Rose, William, and Salvatore. All six were born in Middletown, Connecticut.

Anthony Pestritto was born on October 26, 1907. He was the first child of Gaetano and Carmelina Pestritto. Rosina Nocera was the midwife who helped to deliver Anthony. At that time many of the Italian families used Rosina Nocera rather than a doctor, especially because of the language barrier. Cost was also a factor. As an additional service to a new mother, the midwife would file the record of birth with the official city agency. Anthony Pestritto's birth certificate, as filled out by Rosina Nocera, was filed on November 4, 1907 and lists the birth date at November 2. Tony's mother later said that the actual date was October 26, 1907. A discussion with the Middletown Registrar of Vital Statistics also noted that it was not uncommon for a midwife's record to be off from the exact date by a day or two.
Tony and his oldest sister, Josephine, were born on lower Court Street. Their family lived in Middletown for about three years and then journeyed to Sicily where they stayed for one year while Gaetano remained in Middletown. Carmelina and her two children made the long voyage to Italy by themselves.

During this short stay in Melilli, Sicily, little Tony would often pass the time playing around an uncle's tobacco shop. One day his uncle, on his father's side, carved the child a small wooden flute. Tony quickly mastered the instrument and learned a few simple tunes. His natural talent for music had already started to bud. As a means to encourage the three-year old, the uncle would sit little Tony on the shop counter and prompt him to perform for the local audience. Tony would then entertain his uncle's customers by playing and humming tunes on the flute-like whistle.

Upon the return voyage to the United States, Tony was called upon by fellow travellers to interrupt the normal routine of their long trip. They enticed the youngster to perform for them. He was a big hit on the boat as he sang, whistled, and played for the passengers.
GENERAL LIFE

AND

GROWING UP
Over the next several years, Tony held various jobs after school in Middletown to help raise money for his family. He sold newspapers, shined shoes, worked at local theaters, delivered for Marino's Bakery, set up pins at the local YMCA bowling alley, and worked at Pierson's florists to mention a few. Another occupation he held was as a carpenter's apprentice. Builder Angelo Bellubuono kept Tony on for about six or seven months before firing him. Angelo knew of Tony's talents and desires and told Carmelina Peistritto that it was a waste of time for her son to labor as a carpenter. Her son Tony, he said, had a natural talent for music.

Another reason he let Tony go was because the apprentice made him nervous. Tony did not hammer nails in the fashion of most of us. Instead he would hum a song or whistle a tune and keep time by tapping the nails in with his hammer as he went along. This was often done on roof tops and sides of buildings, and Angelo would be concerned for Tony's safety. In addition, Tony was not always faithful in reporting to work. When possible he would go home and play his new musical instrument, a used C-melody saxophone.

The saxophone was bought from a black man who worked as a janitor at the Berkley Divinity School in Middletown. Tony persuaded his mother to borrow ninety dollars and buy the bright nickle-plated instrument without his father's permission.

Tony loved the instrument and loved music and used every opportunity he could to practice. His brother Chip (James) recalls that Tony would take his instrument to the pool room run by Joseph Papala on Main Street, where Bernie Fields Jewelers is now located, and practice on the second floor. By practicing at the pool hall building, his father would not have to listen to the music after getting home from a long day of work.
Guy Pestritto's pay came to six dollars a week and thus, did not appreciate his oldest son's aspirations to be a musician. Guy wanted his son to learn a trade and become successful in their new country. There was little money as a musician in the local music trade.

As mentioned earlier, Tony would sneak out from carpenter's work and return home to play the saxophone. His father would be working but the rest of the family would "cover for him" and not tell papa. About this time, it was 1924 or so. He had quit school at sixteen when he started in as a carpenter's apprentice with Angelo Bellobuono, but did not return after this carpentry work ended. Instead of going back to continue his education, Tony went to work for a short time at the Remington Rand Factory.
EARLY CAREER

1924–1934
In place of more high school or other full-time work, Tony took to "jobbing around" with local musicians. He would often play with Jim Annino. Annino had a local pick-up band and would allow Tony to sit-in on a few musical numbers. Tony's payment for playing was a ham-and-cheese sandwich which Jim would buy him after each engagement.

Two years after the purchase of Tony's first saxophone, Carmelina Pestritto bought Tony a brand new Alto Sax. He had already paid her back for the used Sax that she had originally bought for him and continued to contribute to the family budget. Within this short period his musical ability was becoming recognized around the local scene and Tony began earning a few dollars for playing engagements. Thus, his mother was happy to be able to afford a new instrument with the added income into the family.

About this time Tony managed to study with Lucius Pandolfini, a graduate of a Sicilian music conservatory. Pandolfini gave Tony music lessons for about two years at a music studio on Main Street. It is interesting to note that Tony did not know how to read music even after his training with Pandolfini. Everything he played and composed came from his head, his ear, and what was on the radio.

All this time, from about 1920 to 1925, Tony was an ardent fan of live music performances. He would travel to neighboring towns throughout Connecticut to hear different groups and musicians perform. A favorite area for entertainers was the Connecticut Beach area on Long Island Sound. Such locations as the Mohegan Hotel in New London, Pine Grove in Niantic, and Sound View in Old Lyme brought many tourists seeking a summer vacation. This tourist trade offered an attractive market for local entertainers. Local Connecticut people, Tony included, would travel to the shore area for summer enjoyment.
The Hartford area was another musical resource. Worthy Hills, a very popular bandleader, owned a nightclub called "Club Worthy" on Trumbull Street in Hartford. The famous State Theatre opened in 1927 on the corner of Main and Windsor Streets. This establishment brought the big names to Hartford such as Artie Shaw, Louis Armstrong, Ted Mack and His Amateur Show, to name only a few.

Worthy Hills, a druggist from Niantic, Connecticut, heard the talk going around the shoreline and the state that a young saxophone player was pretty good. This young man, a Middletown native, was playing various odd jobs and small engagements. His name was Anthony Pestritto and he was only sixteen years old. A bandleader by the name of Allie Wrubel, also from Middletown, was paying Tony $20.00 an engagement to play with his group called the "Wesleyan Serenaders." Hills tracked down this promising musician at the Mohegan Hotel playing and singing with a band for Joe Russo, another local entertainer, and signed him on.

Tony then played with the Worthy Hill Orchestra in Hartford at Club Worthy for about a year and a half. Hills was paying Tony about $75.00 a week. It was 1927 and Tony was nineteen and was now playing tenor sax. It was while playing at Club Worthy in Hartford that Tony got his first big break. Irving Aaronson was in town playing at the State Theatre. Irving Aaronson and His Commanders, a well-trained stage band, was one of the top groups of the time. Aaronson, after his playing date, went over to Club Worthy for the evening. There he had the opportunity to hear Tony's sax playing and singing. He immediately called over the waiter and asked, "Who is the kid playing the Saxophone?"

The waiter responded, "Tony Pestritto." Aaronson then asked the waiter to invite Tony over to his table. After the set, Tony went to the star's table and was offered a job. The offer was turned down because Tony was not prepared to leave his family and travel to New York City.
Shortly after this offer, Tony's mother experienced medical problems and had to go to the hospital. An infection in a blocked tear duct caused her eye to become inflammed and Dr. Loffredo had to operate. With his mother's permission, Tony left for New York City to earn some money to help pay for the hospital expenses.

Tony travelled to New York City by train with only his instrument, a small handbag, and Irving Aaronson's business card. When he reached the Big Apple, he telephoned Aaronson and was quickly put on the payroll. His starting salary was immediately boosted to $115.00 weekly. Before his first band performance, however, Aaronson took Tony to a men's store and bought him his first suit. From his second paycheck on, Tony would always keep only what he needed to live on and would send the rest back to his family for their use. His first paycheck was sent directly back to his mother for her to cash.

Tony toured the country with the Irving Aaronson and His Commanders Orchestra from 1927-1930. Big bands were very popular at this time and received a lot of public attention. Radio was just coming on the scene and television had not yet been invented. Prohibition was in effect (although customers could bring their own booze to club engagements) and newspaper headlines featured gangsters and killings. A story that is told, places Tony and the Irving Aaronson Band at the Grenada Cafe in Chicago. While playing their set, a shoot-out occurred at the premises, and in order to maintain order and control of the crowd, the group just kept on playing through the entire incident.

They also travelled to and played Chicago, New York City, California, New Orleans Mardi Gras, etc. In New York City, Aaronson's mainstay was "Club Richmond" near Broadway. He had a sincere interest in his new performer and paid for Tony to receive lessons for reading music.
In 1930, Tony was twenty-two and was dating a Hartford girl named Dorothy Petrossi. He had met her at Club Worthy a few years before and decided that he wanted to be near home once again. With the help of her father, Louis Petrossi, a successful building contractor, Tony purchased a convalescent home near the Rocky Hill/Wethersfield line.

He remodelled the building using a movie set from Fox Studios in Hollywood, California. The entire interior from Fox Studio had been used in a production involving a nightclub scene which was now housed in Tony's business, entitled Club Hollywood.

Club Hollywood was opened in 1931 and immediately became one of the finest entertainment spots in the central Connecticut area. People from all over the USA would come to Tony's nightclub. Many stars, after appearing at the famous State Theater, would stop by the Club to see Tony. Small aircraft were often seen landing in a field behind Club Hollywood as dignitaries would fly in.

The club was a popular spot for doctors from Middletown. Area physicians would converge on Thursday evenings, doctor's nite, and enjoy the sounds generated by the band and entertainers.

Customers would flock to the Club, pay the cover charge, order dinner and drinks, and enjoy the shows. The prohibition period was still on, ergo, all drinks were soda, etc. Radio had become a larger industry and Friday night shows at Club Hollywood were broadcast statewide via WTIC. These Friday night performance broadcasts were sponsored by Aetna Brewery Co. of Hartford.

Football games at Yale were very popular and well-attended. Many of the fans would frequent the Club after the game on their way home from the game. Thus, Saturday afternoons and evenings in the Fall were especially jammed-up at the Club.
The years from 1930-1934 were good years for Tony. The Club Hollywood opened and was successful. Tony married Dorothy in 1932, and a grand wedding reception was held at the Club.
LATER CAREER

1934–1969
Good things sometimes end, and the depression hit hard in 1934. Business was poor and Tony had to lose Club Hollywood to the bank. The building was sold by the bank. It was remodelled and made into a convalescent home; ironically, the same use it had before Tony purchased it.

After the Club's closing, Tony went back on the road again. He played a series of jobs with the bands of Smith Ballew, Joe Venuti, and Vincent Lopez. Lopez often played at the Hotel Taft in New York and Tony stayed with him for about a year. Vincent Lopez was a noted pianist and was bandleader of a very popular group. The Lopez band, as did many others, featured Tony as a singer and musician. In New Orleans, the Lopez group was doing an engagement which was to be aired on national radio. During the rehearsal for the show, the announcer flubbed Tony's surname (Pestritto) several times. After the fifth mistake, Tony told the announcer to list his name as Tony Pastor.

The name "Pastor" had remained implanted in his memory resulting from an incident which occurred when Tony was a boy of thirteen years. At that point in time, he was working at the Grand Theater in Middletown. This part-time job consisted of passing out pamphlets which advertised upcoming shows and of performing other duties for the theater. As he was shoveling coal into the furnace one night in the basement, a vaudeville comedian passed by and a conversation ensued. Tony mentioned his aspirations for a career in show business and the performer responded, "The only advice I can give you, sonny, is to change your name because you'll never make it with a monicker like Pestritto."

The veteran recommended the name "Tony Pastor." Tony Pastor was a Hungarian who was a famous promoter and restauranteur in the Gay Nineties. His restaurant, located in New York City, served such legends as Diamond Jim Brady (who was as famous for his appetite as he was for his diamonds) and was one of the finest nightclubs in the country. Thus, the name coined in a Middletown theater basement ultimately became the name of Tony
and his family.

Tony's career on the road with Vincent Lopez brought him back to the New York City area. In 1936 he reunited with Artie Shaw who was organizing his own band. Tony played tenor saxophone and sang for the group. Shaw's band also featured a string section and set the brief trend for instrumentations which were later used by such orchestras as Tommy Dorsey and Harry James.

The Shaw group, influenced by Tony Pastor's innovative style, altered its basic format and turned to a "jump" beat. After hearing a Cole Porter tune in the show, "Jumbo", Tony suggested that the band use it. And in 1937 the famous rendition of "Begin the Beguine" was produced by the Artie Shaw band.

Tony's misfortune was a boon to Artie Shaw. On the road, Tony and Artie often roomed together and one night Tony had a bad dream. Artie was awake in the next room composing a new, eerie, tune on his clarinet, but could not find a name for it. Next thing Artie knew, Tony burst through the door mumbling something about a nightmare. Artie sat up and said, "That's it, I'll call it 'Nightmare'". The tune became the popular theme song for the Artie Shaw band and is considered a classic number in music circles today.

Tony Pastor and Artie Shaw were great friends. Their friendship stems back to some of their earlier days. Shaw was from New Haven, Connecticut. During Tony's teenage days a fellow by the name of Ed Farrell would book jobs for him at Yale University social events. Artie would hear Tony play in New Haven and, as a young man just getting interested in music, Artie would practically beg Pastor to allow him to carry his instrument. Shaw considered Tony to be a genius on the alto sax and became his protegé. Artie continued his career in music and soon became a reknown saxophone player.
A few years later in 1929 their paths crossed in Cleveland, Ohio. Tony was with Irving Aaronson and His Commanders and Artie was playing alto sax with the Austin Wiley band. Tony had stopped to eat in a Chinese restaurant while on a cross-country tour and he happened to hear Artie's saxophone playing in the background. A quick search uncovered the talented clarinet player in the combo. Upon Tony's recommendation, Aaronson signed Shaw to the group. They roomed together for the following two years while on the road until Tony left to open Club Hollywood.

Around 1938, Artie Shaw's band also played the Hotel New Yorker in New York City where The Supper Club, positioned around an ice show, was a favorite spot. About this time, Shaw took a leave of absence from the band for medical reasons. He asked his featured performer, Tony Pastor, to take over. Tony's natural talent for music and ability to entertain pleased crowds everywhere. Furthermore, the other band members preferred Tony to Shaw as bandleader. When Shaw returned to the group after about nine weeks, he became jealous of Tony's success and placed him in the back row. The back row is generally reserved for the rookie members of the band and this did not set well with Tony nor some of the other musicians. Furthermore, Artie began to feature other players and discriminated against his leading sax artist.

Such actions were viewed as a bit irregular as Tony had been awarded the honor of "All American Top Tenor Saxophone Artist" by Melodrome Magazine for two consecutive years and had been a featured soloist throughout the life of Shaw's band.

These events provided for the demise of the original Artie Shaw band. In late 1939, the Shaw band was going through a reorganization and was scheduled to become a cooperative arrangement.
"I had a chance to go out with my own band, so who needed a whole band full of partners?" said Tony during an interview as he revealed that he had been offered backing by Cy Shribman, the famous Boston band promoter. Shribman had offered fifty thousand dollars a year earlier to Tony as an incentive to start his own group. However, Artie discouraged such a move and Tony did not leave at that time.

During the restructuring of the Shaw band, Tony left, and in 1940, started his own orchestra. A few of the musicians from the original Shaw group followed Tony to his new band.

Tony's band featured Salvatore, his younger brother, on lead trumpet, trumpeter Maxie Kaminsky, and an outstanding saxophone quintet led by Johnny McAfee. Cy Shribman, who had interests in other big bands of the day such as Woody Herman, Glen Miller, and Claude Thornhill, provided financial backing for Tony's new aggregation.

The sixteen piece orchestra included a sax quintet, four trombones, four trumpets, one piano, a bass, a drummer, and a vocalist, usually female. Tony was responsible for showcasing several female singers and launching them on their careers. However, the most distinctive and most commercial singer ever featured by the band was, of course, Tony.

The most famous female singer with the group that toured with "Tony Pastor and His Pastorized Music" was Rosemary Clooney. Tony discovered Rosemary and her sister Betty in a Philadelphia nightclub and signed them on (1947). Eugenie Baird, Virginia Maxie, Beth Harmon, Kay Little, Dolores Martel and Penie Pryor also sang with Tony during his career. Billie Holiday, another noteworthy female vocalist, toured with Tony in the days of the Shaw Band.
During one tour while the Shaw Band was checking into an elite Boston hotel, Billie Holiday was refused a room because of her skin color. Tony raised a fuss and threatened to move the entire band to another hotel. As a result, Ms. Holiday was given the room.

Another interesting bit of show business history reveals that Tony bought a tuxedo for Vic Damone when they toured together. Singing sensation Tommy Lionette, also got his start with Tony's band.

Tony's band got off to a tough beginning. The Dorsey and James bands were already established and Tony's group had to get exposure. Cy Shribman booked Tony around the country playing hundreds of theatres, hotels, and ballrooms. The most popular locations included the Hotel Statler in New York, Chicago's Sherman Hotel, the Roosevelt Hotel in New Orleans, and the Hollywood Palladium.

Every newly organized band in 1939 and 1940 went to the Blue Room at the Hotel Lincoln in New York City. It was there, with radio coverage and a large crowd, that a new band could get a start. Mrs. Kramer, the owner, offered the new groups little money and a lot of exposure. Thus, new talents seized the opportunity to play the Lincoln's Blue Room in order to establish a reputation and gain some publicity.

With the backing of Cy Shribman, Tony's band played a lengthy engagement at the Lincoln's Blue Room. "We had eighteen air shots a week, so everybody could get to hear us. But the place wouldn't pay for the radio wire, so Cy loaned me the forty-five thousand dollars it cost us." , reminisced Tony. He was able to reimburse Shribman the entire amount from commissions which resulted from a successful career.
Tony's first cousin Vincent J. Vinci, MD, was at New York University School of Medicine at that time. Young Dr. Vinci was surprised one evening to receive a phone call from a funny-sounding, familiar voice. It was Tony's. He had just formed his new band and had landed an engagement with Mrs. Kramer, but he had just come down with laryngitis. How could he sing and perform without his voice? This was his big chance! Dr. Vinci arranged a quick prescription and Tony's voice returned in time for a successful opening.

As earlier indicated, the Pastor Band had been on the road all over the country. Tony Pastor was part of the music scene for several decades and saw it through its various phases—the lush big band period of the 1930's and early 1940's, the slower, frustrating years in the post-war era when the bands took a back seat to the vocalists, and then to a general resurgence during the 1950's.

The Pastor bands have been characterized by their crisp swing, spirit, and the leader's infectiously exuberant will to entertain. Tony's bands always had a style and a signature. "Style," said the bandleader who was a believer in some sort of identifiable musical signature, "is the basis of musical success." Tony's singing was unique, but traces of Louis Armstrong could be found in it. Tony's singing was instrumentalized, that is, his vocal phrasing was very much like the way he played his saxophone.

Armstrong, who Tony greatly admired, also sung in such an instrumentalized fashion. Tony openly admitted that his own personal style was engineered from hearing that great trumpet player sing, "My idol, Mr. Louis Armstrong. Is there anybody better than that?" Like Armstrong, Tony would grin and make faces while singing songs. It would not be a Pastor song if Tony did not let the audience know he was enjoying himself by nodding, grinning, squinting, and smiling his way through every lyric and note.
This ability to communicate to his audience his love of song and stage assisted Tony in becoming the popular big band leader that he was. He could telegraph to his listeners the confidence and enjoyment he had while singing and playing the sax. These talents would infect his audiences so that they would enjoy themselves as much as he did throughout the performances.

Big band performances were among the top means of entertainment at the time. Groups had to travel from town to town across the country to play for their followers and earn a living. When a band travelled constantly on the road, they played "one-nighters." Money was good and there was plenty of exposure. But it was a very tiring pace. Thus, many bands enjoyed the alternative of playing on location. Playing on location did not pay as much as a one-nighter, but it gave the band a pleasant break from constantly moving on. This was the music business way of life for Tony in those days.

When World War II hit during the early forties, Tony and his band would play at the different service camps and officer's clubs. They often entertained without charge for our service men around the country.

After the war, individual singers received more attention in the music business. Television was becoming more accessible to the average citizen and audiencies tended to rally around an individual performer, rather than a large band. Thus, vocalists became more popular than the big bands.
Another reason for the demise of the big band was the enormous cost involved in the management and operation of a large ensemble. Travel costs were going up, large payrolls were taxing, and costs related to the music industry's specialized equipment provided economic disincentives for maintaining a big band.

Tony Pastor, however, succeeded in sustaining his big band longer than most of his other peers. The band concentrated more on jazz arrangements during the mid-forties. Tony employed Walter Fuller and Budd Johnson to compose numbers having an up-to-date jazz flavor. This adaptation maintained their popularity and continued success a while longer.

Finally, around 1957, Tony chose to reduce the size of his band to eight people. The music business continued to change and Tony had to stay with it. By this time the recording industry had followed the television and motion picture businesses out to the West Coast. Much of the action in music was centered around the clubs in Las Vegas and Los Angeles.

Tony's smaller group frequented the above towns as well as Lake Tahoe and Reno. During a three week job in Las Vegas Tony added his two older sons to the act. The three of them, Tony, Guy, and Tony Jr. were so well-received that all records were smashed as they turned their stay into an eighteen week continuous engagement.
Tony's third son, John, also performed with his father and brothers on a number of occasions. The sons pursued their own careers while Tony continued to perform.

Tragically, in 1968, Tony was stricken with a heart attack while playing an engagement at the Sheraton-Hilton Hotel in Dayton, Ohio. The ailment left him partially paralyzed and ended his career. Tony Pastor was confined to a wheel chair until his death on October 26, 1969.
HIS IMPACT UPON

MUSIC AND CULTURE
As an integral part of modern day music's history, Tony Pastor directly impacted American musical culture. His effect is illustrated as a member of various bands upon which he made his mark. As a band member Tony contributed to music by composing tunes, naming songs, touring cities, and supporting various orchestras with his talent. As a band leader, Pastor helped to mold numerous young performers, to develop better musicians, entertained thousands of people, set musical trends through his special style and songs, and helped to impact big band music and fellow stars.

Tony Pastor, was a star, was a friend to the stars. A short listing of some of his show-business friends follows:
FAMOUS PEOPLE ASSOCIATED WITH TONY PASTOR

Partial Listing

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
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Many more exist, as Tony "met them all" during his travels. Road trips took him from home to the Big Apple, to Florida, to Vegas, to New Orleans, to Chicago, to Hollywood. Music, the principle component, was only one factor in his show business life. Besides live musical performances, Tony Pastor was featured on radio programs, hit recordings, albums, television, personal appearances, and movies.

A partial listing of Tony's hit songs is shown on the next page. Some of his many album releases include:

**Hey Tony:** Tony Pastor and His Orchestra, Columbia Records, Harmony Label.

**P.S. - Tony Pastor plays and sings Shaw,** Belock Recording, Everest Label Records.
**Let's Dance With Tony Pastor,** Roulette.

His sons also contributed to his work including albums entitled:

The Pastors Cut Up Tenderloin, Capitol Records.
Shakin Up Vegas, Capitol Records.

Film shorts and movies were also done by Tony Pastor. Activities in this area include:

Two Blondes And A Redhead
SMASH HITS Recorded by Tony Pastor

Partial Listing

Bell Bottom Trousers
The Lady From 29 Flams
Makin Whoopie
I Wonder, I Wonder
Let's Do It
Indian Love Call
Begin The Beguine
Honeysuckle Rose
I'm Confessin
A, You're Adorable
On The Sunny Side Of The Street
Your Red Wagon
Robin Hood
A Dolly With A Hole In Her Stocking
Come Over My House
Oh Marie
Somebody Stole My Gal
Green Eyes
Who's Sorry Now
The Sheik Of Araby
Little White Lies
It Happened In Monterey
Nightmare
I'm Sorry For Myself
HIS ETHNIC CONSCIENCE
Tony Pastor certainly had an ethnic conscience. He was American born with a strong, identifiable Italian heritage. He was proud of his ancestry and often showed it, both on and off the stage.

As he began his career in show business, Tony continued to use his name: Tony (Anthony) Pestritto. He used his proper name during his first ten years in the music business. It was not until a special situation forced him into using "Pastor" as a related show name. After that incident as described earlier on page 11, he continued to use the shorter, easier-to-pronounce name of Tony Pastor. He eventually changed his surname to Pastor and Dorothy, his wife, and their three sons are Pastors. Tony's brother Salvatore also adopted the Pastor name and uses it today with his familiar nickname "Stubby" Pastor.

One of Tony's strongest traits was his sincere love for his fellow man. This was even more evident when it involved family members. As was mentioned earlier, Tony never forgot his family and would always send home a check for Mama. It became routine to receive a weekly check from Tony at the Western Union office.

A special graduation present was arranged for Tony, Jr. as his father brought the band home to play for Hall High School's Senior Ball in 1955. Tony Pastor loved to come home and visit as well. When he did, he often enjoyed singing along with his guitar playing uncle, Salvatore Vinci.

When family members or relatives would visit Tony at a New York club, it was always front row seat and special treatment. Tony Pastor never forgot his "roots" and always had a smile for someone from Middletown or another part of his past. He would always bend-over-backwards to make sure any friend was comfortable and taken care of.
This kind of hospitality was extended to his friends from show business as well. Many of his professional associates would visit at Club Hollywood and receive the royal welcome. Frank Sinatra and Perry Como, among others, stayed with Tony and Dorothy at their home.

Tony Pastor also helped launch fellow countrymen into the music business with his band. Local musicians like Sal Formica (tenor sax), Seb Giacco (sax), Marty Mariano (drums) and Les Burness (piano) were given their start with Tony's group. In Tony's bands, the majority of musicians were usually of Italian descent.

Perhaps the most obvious trait showcasing Tony's pride for his Italian heritage was the style of his performances. When he sang, played, and entertained he would emphasize his ethnicity. This was most easily done when the group played an Italian song. Tony knew the language and sang with authority. Regardless of the type of song, however, Tony would use gesture, emotion, and facial expression in such a way that the listener could visualize that Pastor was saying "I'm Italian." This he did with a genuine pride and unique delivery which radiated joy in his ancestry and in his work.
TESTIMONIAL

TO A GREAT MAN
Tony Pastor was a great musician, a great singer, and a great entertainer. His many achievements throughout his esteemed career are testimony to this fact. Besides his many hit songs and albums, Tony was recognized for two years in a row as the Melodrome Magazine "All American Top Tenor Sax Artist" in the country.

Mayor Kenneth Dooley of Middletown, Connecticut proclaimed November 30, 1968 as "Tony Pastor Day" in Tony's home town. The Mayor's proclamation noted that Tony Pastor "was a successful performer whose accomplishments provided a source of inspiration to many young musicians and a source of pride to citizens of Middletown. Unfortunately, Tony's recent illness has forced him to curtail many of his activities, but now that he is well along on the road of recuperation, we hope that he will continue to provide us with more of his fine music."

Moreover, a testimonial dinner in honor of Tony Pastor was held on the same day at the Holiday Inn in Meriden, Connecticut. More than 675 friends and relatives attended the tribute to this bandleader. Presentations were made by Mayor Kenneth Dooley; Don Ovans, Editor of Billboard; Lt. Governor of Connecticut, Attilio Frassinelli; and more than 400 telegrams from show business friends were received.

A unique highlight of the testimonial included recorded messages to Tony from Louis Armstrong; Frank, Nancy and Frank Sinatra, Jr; Pearl Bailey; Rosemary Clooney; Buddy Rich, Count Basie, Ralph Edwards, Tony Bennett, Steve Lawrence, the Mills Brothers, Ray Anthony, Jerry Vale, and numerous other stars. Each celebrity had a personal message on behalf of this special occasion for Tony.
This event in Tony's career was possibly rivalled by one other honor: the "This Is Your Life" television show. Several years earlier in June of 1960, Tony Pastor was featured by Ralph Edwards on "This Is Your Life." Edwards had pointed out that Tony's many friends, reputation, and personality contributed to making it one of the best shows in the series. The program was based in California and the entire, immediate family was flown out to the West Coast. Tony's sisters Josephine Saraceno and Rose Tommasi, and his brothers William (Tickey Pestritto) James (Chip) Pestritto, and Salvatore (Stubby) Pastor were all in attendance for the special telecast. A special bonus for Tony was that his mother, Carmelina Pestritto, also braved her first flight (at age ) to be with her son during the show.

Tony Pastor was indeed a special man and loved by all who knew him.

This short chronicle touches on a few highlights of this great entertainer's life and is in no way a complete story. This Italian-American from Middletown who rose through the ranks in show business attained great successes in music. He made history and impacted the music scene for 45 years from 1923-1968. More importantly, he enjoyed music and entertaining and brought this joy to audiences and people across the country.
TONY PASTOR (center) posed for this photo several years ago during an appearance at a Las Vegas hotel. With Pastor are two of his sons, Tony Jr. (left) and Guy, who toured with their dad's band.
TONY PASTOR, during the height of his career as bandleader and singer featured the playing of his younger brother, Sal (right), lead trumpet in the acclaimed orchestra.
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