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Goldmine

Courtesy of Sony Music/by Lois Greenfield



Tony Bennett

With a career that reaches from smooth, romantic '50s pop ("Because Of You," "Stranger In Paradise") to an MTV appearance with Red Hot Chili Peppers, Tony Bennett enjoys the rare status of being a beloved hero to the MTV generation, their parents and their grandparents. He's a relaxed crooner who's most at home in a jazz setting. At age 78, he's still going strong, winning Grammy® Awards galore in the last decade, recently releasing a new studio album and enjoying a side career as a visual artist. Bennett looks back on 50 years of stardom in a candid *Goldmine* interview.

And of course there will be all the regular news and columns that keep people coming back issue after issue, regardless of the cover artist!

Advertisers: This issue is perfect to sell recordings as well as music and memorabilia from the 1950s to present.

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(Master tapes from page 12)

Van Gool said that finds of masters are not entirely unusual, as studios go out of business and forgotten stored tapes are liquidated. "Sometimes you run into a gold mine, and I'm not talking about the magazine," he quipped. "Sometimes these discoveries — and I'm not talking about the other [magazine] — can lead to some very great finds."

For someone to go about selling master tapes, Van Gool recommended first starting with a record label that controls the artist's back catalog and probably paid for the session in the first place. If the label is defunct and its catalog wasn't purchased by another label, finding the artist is another option for tapes' sale. Publishing associations such as ASCAP or BMI might also be helpful in tracking copyright owners down, though publishing rights and recording rights holders might not always be the same entity, just as the person who wrote the material is not always the same person who performed it.

"It's not guaranteed that [artists] own the rights to their own music," Van Gool noted. "There's never a transparent or an obvious answer to who owns it or to whom it should belong."

The condition, contents and artist involved all determine a tape's value — like collectible records but on a level all its own — but even tapes with some deterioration are worth something. "[Tapes]

are very sensitive to the elements: moisture, light, dust.... They need to be kept in a climate-controlled environment, a dark space — it's gotta be dry. It takes absolutely nothing for mold to set in on these tapes. If you don't know how to remove mold, you can damage the tapes. It's not uncommon for older recordings to have some level of deterioration. It's the same with old movies.... But we live in 2005. There's such phenomenal equipment to restore original recordings."

Graefe's boxes of tapes have been stored, sealed, in a closet on the main level of his home for years, so he assumes that their condition is stellar. He hadn't even opened them all after buying them in 1987, knowing he had nothing on which to play them. To inventory them, all he had to do was to look at the spines and cover sheets attached to the front of each tape box.

After being stored so long with no personal use, though, it's finally time for them to go. He said that when he and his wife moved out to California from Wausau in 1961, all their earthly possessions fit into their '55 Buick. Thirty-two years later, "We came back with a U-Haul plumb full." Before their next move, "We're trying to lighten the load."

— Cathy Bernardy

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