



# Adelaide Theatre Guide

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## **A JAZZ PORTRAIT OF FRANK SINATRA**

**Gregg Arthur**

Festival Theatre Stage

Until 17 June 2006

Review by Simon Slade

One of the great things about the Adelaide Cabaret Festival is the opportunity to see shows presented in unusual locations. This show is no exception, with the unique setting of the Festival Theatre stage. The sense of anticipation is palpable, as the audience members make their way down the aisle and across the orchestra pit, before climbing the steps to the stage. As a bonus it gives audience members the chance to say things like, "When I was on the stage at the Festival Theatre..."

Rather than being simply a Frank Sinatra tribute show, this is a work that is based on a record album from 1959. "A Jazz Tribute to Frank Sinatra" was an instrumental album recorded in Paris by Oscar Peterson. Using that work as a theme, with the lyrics returned to the songs, the show comes together as a vehicle to showcase the talents of Australian singer and songwriter, Gregg Arthur.

This is made all the more interesting because Gregg Arthur is not doing an impersonation of Sinatra. Whilst taking cues from the vocal style of Sinatra at times, he injects his own personality and vocal qualities into many of the songs.

The show does not follow the album alone, but ranges wider into other songs too. These include "I Could Have Danced All Night," "Just One of Those Things," "I Get a Kick Out Of You," "I've Got You Under My Skin," and "Fly Me to the Moon."

There are some jokes and anecdotes interwoven with the songs, but done in a way that keeps the focus on the music

Performed by the extraordinarily talented Michael Hope Trio, with Michael Hope on piano, Steve Todd on drums and Dave Phillips on double bass, the arrangements are both interesting and well executed. A wonderfully clear and well balanced sound, aided by the use of high quality equipment, further enhances the overall experience. Surprisingly, there were a couple of problems with microphone feedback part way through the show, but these were short-lived.

Lit by a simple wash from the front, with some intelligent lights behind to provide highlights, the focus is kept on the performers.

Some came for the jazz, some came for the Sinatra, and the two single ladies at the back had clearly come to swoon over Gregg Arthur. This show satisfied them all.