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POST-CONNICK *Crooners*

In the 20 years since Harry Connick Jr. first laid valid claim to the Sinatra throne, dozens more young pop-jazz vocalists have thrown their fedoras into the ring-a-ding-ding. Thus far, five have emerged at the top of the heap. C.L.



Michael Bublé

Despite chart-topping success in Australia, across Europe and in his native Canada, it took the doggedly determined Vancouverite nearly a decade to break into the U.S. market, finally busting through with the appropriately titled *It's Time* (143/Reprise) in 2005. Since then, the savvy self-promoter, as smart a marketer as he is an entertainer, has charmed album buyers to the tune of nearly 30 million in global sales. Think of him as the Dino to Connick's Frank.



Peter Cincotti

Mentored by Connick, the native New Yorker seemed the likely heir apparent when, at age 19, he hit the top of the jazz charts with his eponymous debut album in 2003, then delivered the near-equally popular *On the Moon* (Concord) a year later. Well, apparently the heir has faltered. After an extended recording silence, the singer-pianist served up *East of Angel Town* (Warner Bros.), a pop-rock platter of originals that garnered little fanfare.



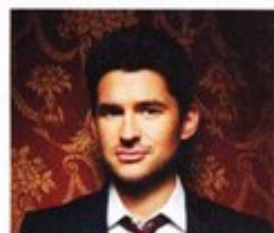
Jeremy Davenport

Another Connick mentee (and an alumnus of Connick's big band), the Missourian singer-trumpeter has been a fixture of the New Orleans music scene for over a decade. He has four albums of standards to his credit, but the discs fail to fully capture the sizzle of his live shows. Fortunately, he's on tap every weekend, performing to enthusiastic crowds in the lounge that shares his name, inside the posh Ritz-Carlton hotel.



Tony DeSare

Among Connick acolytes, DeSare is the cream of the current crop. As both vocalist and pianist, he's a proficient student of debonair swing, equally adept at revitalizing Tin Pan Alley chestnuts and shaping originals that suggest retro influences (without sounding creaky). His progress—three solid albums in five years—has been steady, and though he's unlikely to eclipse Bublé in sheer popularity, he seems best poised to win the talent race.



Matt Dusk

Back in 2004, the fresh-faced, Toronto-born Dusk was expected to rocket to Connick-sized success via his role as a Vegas lounge singer in the Fox reality series *The Casino*. The show tanked, but Dusk persevered. His latest, *Good News* (Universal), finds him veering from the Rat Pack path to focus more on original material. Nonetheless, a hint of Sinatra remains, with "One for My Baby" included as a bonus track.