

# Lincoln Smarter Than Luxury

**Tom Roush**  
**LINCOLN**

US 31 & 169TH STREET • WESTFIELD/CARMEL, IN  
1-800-891-6205 • WWW.TOMROUSH.COM

**MKZ SIGN & DRIVE**



**2011 LINCOLN MKZ**  
**\$399\*/MO.**



**2011 LINCOLN MKX**  
**\$499\*/MO.**



**2010 LINCOLN MKT**  
**\$8000 Off**

**NO MONEY DOWN, NO FIRST PAYMENT, NO SECURITY DEPOSIT.**

2011 MKZ-27 Month lease, 10,500 miles per year, plus sales tax and fees. • 2011 MKX-39 Month lease, 10,000 miles per year, \$3,500 down payment, plus sales tax and fees.

## THE GREAT AMERICAN SONGBOOK

# MUSIC FOR ALL

Michael Feinstein's career path took him from Ohio to California to an association with Ira Gershwin before he became caretaker of America's cherished songs of the 20th century

By Jay Harvey

jay.harvey@indystar.com

There may have been only one gig that Michael Feinstein snagged by default — and that was *after* he had become a celebrity magnet.

About three decades ago, the pianist-singer, now artistic director of the Center for the Performing Arts and a nationally known performer, was trying to make his mark in Los Angeles, where he had moved from Ohio at the age of 20. After a scrappy start at places with names like Mother's, with nary a mother among the customers, Feinstein began to get a foothold on the Tinseltown piano-bar scene.

"I was hired at a place called 385 North," he said, "and I was there for five months when I got an offer from the Mondrian Hotel, one of the new hotels in L.A. It was there I started getting a lot of attention."

It was well-connected attention, too, as only Hollywood can provide. George Burns, Jean Stapleton and Elizabeth Taylor started to drop by.

Liza Minnelli and he became such good friends that she hosted a birthday bash for him. "That was the watershed — when Liza threw that party for me," he said.

Then Feinstein got an offer to do an act in a San Francisco hotel that wanted to reopen an old nightclub room. "The owner's aunt had heard me in L.A. and said I was not very good," he said, "but they couldn't get anyone else, so I got the job by default." Before long, a newspaper columnist gave him favorable publicity and success followed.

An apprenticeship in his hometown of Columbus, Ohio, had taught him how to sing and play piano at the same time.

His repertoire was set very early. From his early teens, Feinstein was drawn to the best of Tin Pan Alley and its branches into stage and screen. He doesn't believe the appeal of the best songs of Gershwin, Berlin, Porter, Kern and others needs to rely on the nostalgia of those whose pop-culture memories precede rock 'n' roll.

"For me, it's the quality and uniqueness of the material. It's still extraordinarily powerful. The craft, construction and quality of those songs are the defining factors."

Feinstein's six-year association with Ira Gershwin, who wrote the lyrics to many of his brother George's most memorable songs, "gave me a greater appreciation for the art of lyric writing." The contexts and back stories of classic songs that Gershwin shared with him increased his understanding and gave him material to pass on to audiences.

Feinstein, 54, brings that insider's knowledge of how art is created — as well as decades of onstage performance — to his job at the performing-arts center.

Mayor Jim Brainard is impressed by Feinstein's advocacy of the Great American Songbook. Feinstein's collection of Songbook artifacts also will be housed in the Palladium.

"He's a wonderful performer," Brainard said, "but this is almost his true love: music scholarship and archival. Before CNN came along, these songs are what the world knew America by."

Now the world may begin to know of Carmel as a major repository for those songs — and a place where the performing arts will shine for decades to come.

★ Call Star reporter Jay Harvey at (317) 444-6402.



Among items donated to the Foundation for the Preservation of the Great American Songbook is this vinyl acetate 78 rpm copy of "One Meatball," as recorded by the Andrews Sisters in 1945 and originally owned by New York City radio station WHN. Robert Boyer, a noted fan of LaVerne, Maxene and Patty Andrews, donated magazines, movie posters and recordings related to the trio.

Public will be able to view the Great American Songbook archives, including first-edition sheet music, and listen to vintage LPs at the Carmel center

By David Lindquist

david.lindquist@indystar.com

Doris Anne Sadler said there's an element of mystery to the Michael Feinstein Foundation for the Preservation of the Great American Songbook, which has a new home on the top floor of the Palladium.

"I get a few phone calls: 'Can I buy a copy of that?'" Sadler said in reference to an inquiry to the Great American Songbook — which, by the way, isn't a single volume of compositions or recordings.

Feinstein, the center's artistic director, defines the Great American Songbook as a composite of Broadway show tunes and Hollywood movie numbers that were the nation's most popular songs during the first half of the 20th century.

"This genre of music is culturally important," said Sadler, former Marion County Clerk and current executive director of the Feinstein foundation.

"This music got us through World War I, got us through the Depression and got us through World War II. Much of the world — especially Europe — knows America by these tunes."

Feinstein's roots as a Great American Songbook historian trace to the 1970s, when he worked as an archivist for famed lyricist Ira Gershwin. The foundation's exhibit space will include autographed first-edition sheet music of "Rhapsody in Blue," the 1924 instrumental composed by Gershwin's brother, George.

Cuff links owned by Frank Sinatra will be on display. Sinatra's widow, Barbara, gave the cuff links to Feinstein, who recorded an album titled "The Sinatra Project" in 2008.

For now, personal effects of celebrities make up a sliver of the foundation's archives.

The west side of the top floor at the Palladium will house the foundation's offices, collections of sheet music and recordings, a listening/performance room and a modest-sized exhibit space.

A 3,500-square-foot Great American Songbook museum is planned for the east side of the top floor, but "that's a very expensive proposition" with no timeline for completion, Sadler said.

Meanwhile, visitors can learn about Sinatra, Gershwin and Indiana natives Cole Porter and Hoagy Carmichael on a touch-screen timeline developed in conjunction with the Indiana Historical Society.

Students and musicians are invited to hear vintage LPs, and even sing and play from sheet music at a keyboard in the foundation's listening room.

"The music is meant to be heard and performed," Sadler said. "We single-mindedly want to make it accessible to people."

Beyond contributions from Feinstein's personal collection, the archives have grown thanks to donations by jazz critic Will Friedwald, Andrews Sisters expert Robert Boyer, sheet-music maven Bob Grimes and the estate of composer Hy Zaret.

Feinstein, a five-time Grammy Award nominee, shared a glimpse of his offstage life as a collector in the 2010 PBS mini-series "Michael Feinstein's American Songbook." He has rescued items discarded by publishers and movie studios, and he frequents flea markets in search of melodic gems.

"He's crazy about it," Sadler said, "in a good way."

★ Call Star reporter David Lindquist at (317) 444-6404.



FRANK ESPICH / The Star

This customized big-band arrangement of Cole Porter's 1936 standard "It's De-Lovely" was used by musicians on "The Phil Harris-Alice Faye Show." The NBC Radio Network broadcast the "Harris-Faye" program from 1948 to 1954. Porter, a native of Peru, Ind., wrote music and lyrics for Broadway productions from "Kiss Me, Kate" to "Anything Goes."



Feinstein foundation archivist Lisa Lobdell works in a storage space where the belongings of late composer Hy Zaret are stored. In the foreground is Zaret's American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers award for "Unchained Melody," a 1955 composition recorded by more than 500 artists, the most definitive of which became a Top Five hit by the Righteous Brothers in 1965. The foundation's collection includes Zaret's typewritten lyric sheet for the song.

# Mazda Sign and Drive



**Tom Roush**  
**MAZDA**

US 31 AND 169TH STREET • WESTFIELD/CARMEL, IN  
1-800-891-6204 • WWW.TOMROUSH.COM

**2 YEARS FREE MAINTENANCE!!**



**2011 MAZDA 3**  
**\$199\*/MO.**



**2011 MAZDA 6**  
**\$239\*/MO.**



**2011 MAZDA CX-7**  
**\$299\*/MO.**

**NO MONEY DOWN, NO FIRST PAYMENT, NO SECURITY DEPOSIT.**

42 Month lease, 10K per year, plus sales tax and fees.