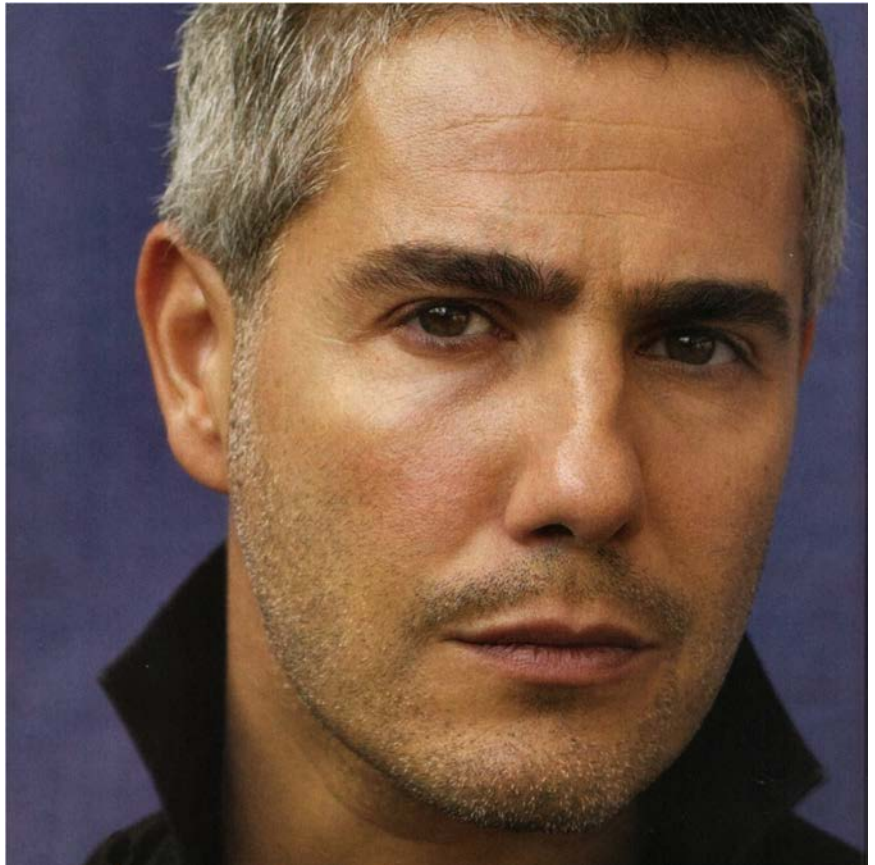


Alessandro Safina

The Italian tenor Alessandro Safina – born in Siena on 14 October 1963 – discovered his passion for singing at early age; he was only nine years old when he started studying music and more specifically applied himself to classical music. His enthusiasm for opera came from his parents. They shared their love of operatic music often by singing to him.

At the age of 17 he applied to the well-established Conservatorio di Musica 'Luigi Cherubini' in Florence and at rather young age began singing several leading parts in famous operas on European stages. 'Rodolfo' in Giacomo Puccini's 'La Bohème' (his big breakthrough in 1990) and 'Vladimir Lenski' in Tsjaykovski's 'Eugène Onegin' are only two examples. He is praised everywhere for the depth of his voice and the intensity of his style.

Although he is totally wrapped in his love for the classical music and often listens to his idol, the legendary tenor Enrico



Caruso, Alessandro was also inspired by pop/rock bands like U2, Genesis, Depeche Mode and The Clash. As time passed his urge to merge the two genres grew stronger by his desire to bring classical music closer to the people. When Romano Musumarra, musician and composer, approached him with the song 'La Sete Di Vivere', he immediately responded enthusiastically. The mutual admiration grew when Musumarra heard Alessandro's rendition of his song. The self-titled pop opera album by Alessandro Safina, the opera singer, was recorded and in March 2000 and he presents his new music style for the first time live to the audience in the world famous theatre 'l'Olympia' in Paris.



His definitive breakthrough started in the Netherlands in November 2000, where he performed in 'The Night of the Proms'. With his single 'Luna' he built the bridge between classical music and pop; the song remained number 1 for 14 weeks.

A concert in The Hague in January 2001, that was broadcasted many times on television, even brought greater success; the Dutch public enamored by the great talent of the handsome, charismatic tenor with his captivating smile and his warm sense of humor. In April of the same year he gave another successful concert, this time in Amsterdam.

His debut album 'INSIEME A TE' flew off the shelves in the Netherlands and became 4 times platinum within a few months. The cd was released in 38 countries. Meanwhile more than a million copies of 'Insieme a Te' are sold.

Besides The Netherlands, Safina has achieved great successes in Brazil and Korea, where he performed as a guest during concerts of Barbara Hendricks and Sumi Jo.

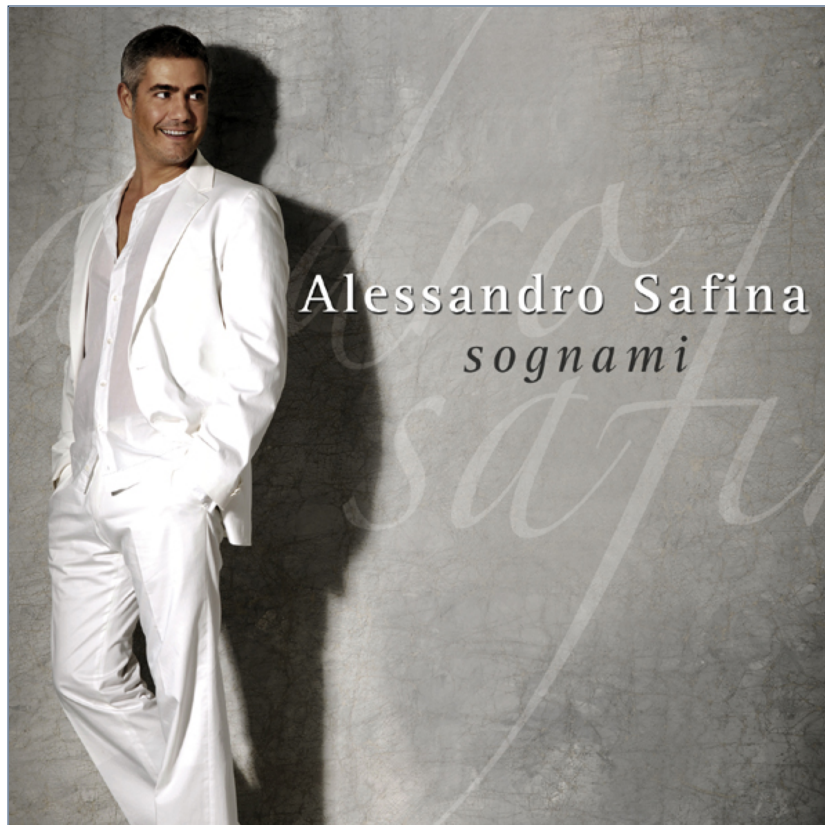
In September 2001 the legendary concert 'Only You' was taped in the beautiful ambiance of the famous amphitheatre 'El Greco' in Taormina, Sicily. Millions of people worldwide have enjoyed this concert on television in the series 'Great Performances' of the American national channel PBS. In February 2003 the concert is released on dvd.

November 2001. Alessandro is one of the performing guests of Queen Elisabeth during the '73rd Royal Variety Performance'. He gives a masterly performance of Andrew Lloyd Webber's 'Music of the Night'.

In 2001 Alessandro also contributes musically to Baz Luhrmann's successful movie 'Moulin Rouge'. In duet with Ewan McGregor he sings Elton John's classic hit 'Your Song'.

Soon after his marriage in April 2002, Elton and Alessandro record 'Your song' again on CD for the charity fund 'Sport Relief' and end up in the Top 5 of the British charts. In May he performed on stage in Rome and plays the part of 'Danilo Danilowitsch' in 'La Vedova Allegra'. In July of the same year he became the proud father of a beautiful son.

One month later Alessandro received - as a worldwide ambassador of the Italian 'musica lyrica' - in his homeland the Mario Lanza trophy.



In 2003: Safina can be seen and heard in the Italian cinemas as an actor; he appeared as the painter 'Mario Cavaradossi' in 'Tosca e Altre Due', a movie based on the opera 'Tosca' of Giacomo Puccini. Meanwhile he works on his new album... On the European version of Rod Stewart's album 'As Time Goes By', released in November 2003, his warm tenor voice can be heard in a duet with Stewart: 'Don't Get Around Much Anymore...' For the soundtrack album of the Korean tv series 'Daejangkeum' Alessandro goes into studio to record the song 'Ha-Mang-Yeon' in a Korean and an English version.

In September 2003 'MUSICA DI TE', a new wonderful album of the talented and handsome singer is successfully released in Holland. The famous London Chamber Orchestra and Carlos Santana participated in the making of the album. Since January 2004 it has been released in many other

countries. "It was a lot of work to finish this album", Alessandro says, modestly smiling. "We've been working on it for more than a year. But nevertheless, I still love to hear it... and, I must say, that's something special for a perfectionist like me". Alessandro is proud of his second album... rightly! In fourteen beautiful songs Safina breaks

down barriers between pop and classic again. Just like the first Safina album: highly recommended... classical pop with a warm Italian soul!

After a concert in the world famous Concertgebouw in Amsterdam in November 2003, Safina received an ovation from the audience that went on for many minutes. One month later, Alessandro performed a concert in Utrecht for 11.000 people who became instant fans.

February 2004: during an exclusive concert premiere in Munich, Alessandro receives accolades from an adoring German audience.

Holland is totally taken with the charismatic singer. In the summer of 2004 he successfully gives three more - filled to capacity - open air concerts in Tegelen and Maastricht and immortalizes his hands in concrete for Europe's largest star boulevard, the 'Walk of Fame' in Rotterdam.

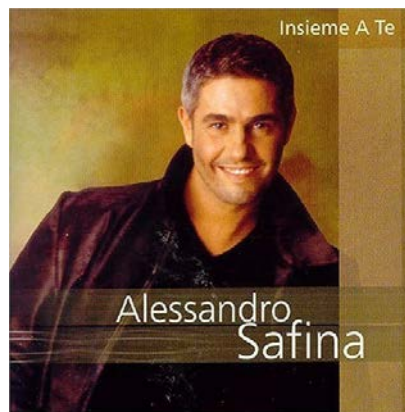
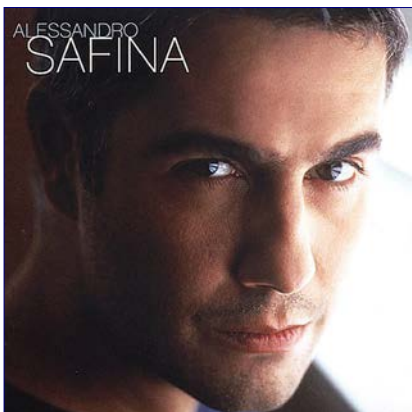
Alessandro's third album 'SOGNAMI' was released early April 2007 in Germany and the Netherlands. Having great response it was immediately released in the remaining EU countries with release dates set for Australia and South Asia in May 2007.



Top World Music Albums

Issue Date: January 19, 2002

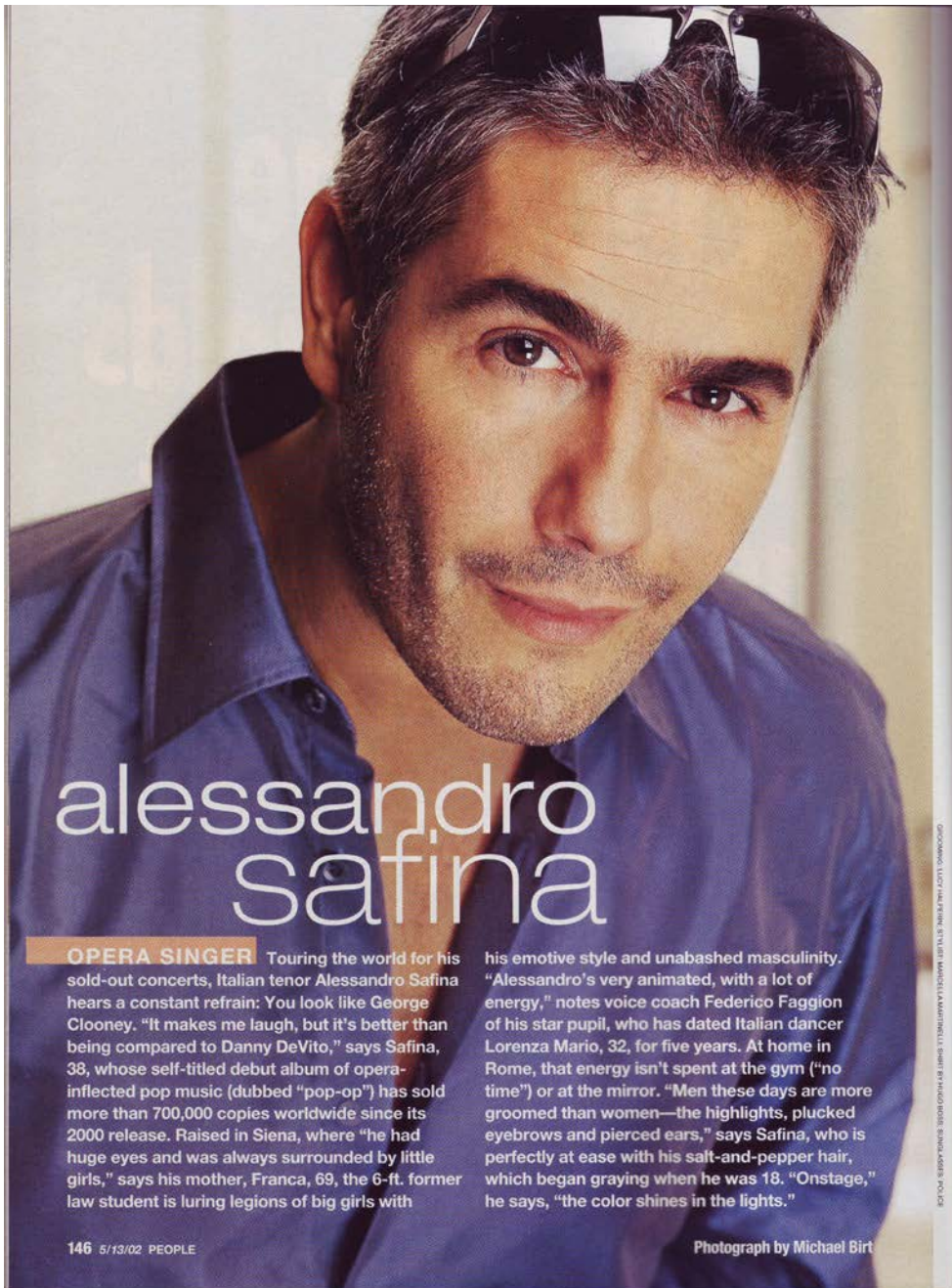
This Week	Last Week	Two Weeks Ago	Weeks on Chart	Artist, "Title" Imprint Catalog No. Distributing Label	Peak Position
1	1	2	10	Various Artists, Celtic Christmas-Silver Anniversary Edition Windham Hill 11603 RCA	1
2	2	1	14	Gipsy Kings, Somos Gitanos Nonesuch 79642 AG (17.98 CD)	1
3	4	7	8	Alessandro Safina, Alessandro Safina Music For A Better World 493117 Interscope	3
4	5	5	15	Israel Kamakawiwo'Ole, Alone In Iz World Big Boy 5907 The Mountain Apple Company (17.98 CD)	1



Fifty Most Beautiful People

People

weekly



alessandro safina

OPERA SINGER Touring the world for his sold-out concerts, Italian tenor Alessandro Safina hears a constant refrain: You look like George Clooney. "It makes me laugh, but it's better than being compared to Danny DeVito," says Safina, 38, whose self-titled debut album of opera-inflected pop music (dubbed "pop-op") has sold more than 700,000 copies worldwide since its 2000 release. Raised in Siena, where "he had huge eyes and was always surrounded by little girls," says his mother, Franca, 69, the 6-ft. former law student is luring legions of big girls with

his emotive style and unabashed masculinity. "Alessandro's very animated, with a lot of energy," notes voice coach Federico Faggion of his star pupil, who has dated Italian dancer Lorenza Mario, 32, for five years. At home in Rome, that energy isn't spent at the gym ("no time") or at the mirror. "Men these days are more groomed than women—the highlights, plucked eyebrows and pierced ears," says Safina, who is perfectly at ease with his salt-and-pepper hair, which began graying when he was 18. "Onstage," he says, "the color shines in the lights."

interview

By George!

No, it's not George Clooney. There may be a striking similarity, but the man on the right is actually fast-rising opera star Alessandro Safina – who so impressed Sir Elton that he was asked to sing a duet with him. Interview by David Wigg

IN HIS all-white, expansive, luxury West End hotel suite, opera's newest heart-throb Alessandro Safina jokes: "You know, for an Italian it's easier to make pizza in England than it is to make music."

Yet Safina has succeeded in breaking through any barriers that might exist. Through his impressive appearance on the Royal Variety Performance singing Andrew Lloyd Webber's *The Music Of The Night* from *Phantom Of The Opera*, and his romantic album *Insieme A Te* (*Together With You*), which has sold over a million copies, this handsome Italian has made a real impression on British audiences.

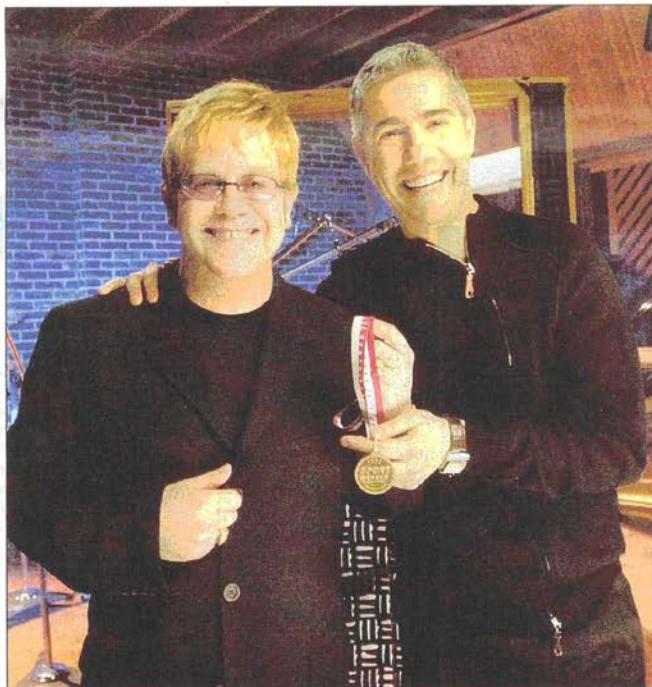
He's also popular with a number of show business celebrities including Catherine Zeta Jones, Nicole Kidman, Elizabeth Hurley, Elton John and Chrissie Hynde, with whom he toured last year. "When I heard him for the first time I was stunned by his voice because it's so powerful and beautiful," says Chrissie, *The Pretenders'* frontwoman.

After meeting Elton John at the Royal Variety Performance, Safina was thrilled to be invited to record a duet of *Your Song* with him. This has just been released, along with a video featuring the duo singing Elton's classic 1971 hit, in aid of Sport Relief, the charity project devised by Comic Relief and BBC Sport to raise money to help vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people in the UK and across the world.

"I felt a lot of emotion before meeting him in the studio, but after five minutes I was really comfortable because Elton was so nice and lovely. He was dressed in Versace and we talked about Gianni Versace, because he was a great friend of his. Elton was telling me he had bought a house in Italy. He was very friendly. The whole session was amazing."

Safina was thrilled when David Beckham agreed to a cameo appearance in the video. He is seen lip-synching the words of the song with some of the children who will benefit from the money raised from the campaign.

"I'm a fan of his, because he's a great



POPOPERATICS: Elton and Alessandro, left, at the recording of *Your Song*, proudly show off their Sport Relief medal and right, Alessandro does his best Clooney impression

Pictures: LORENZO AGLIUS, OK! MAGAZINE

football player, a beautiful, handsome guy as well as being very trendy. It was good for the charity Sport Relief to have him on the video with us, because David is really famous and popular everywhere. He's more important than the Prime Minister, isn't he?"

Safina, whose voice has been compared to that of Andrea Bocelli and Jose Carreras, also sang with Ewan McGregor on the Oscar-nominated soundtrack of *Moulin Rouge*. "It would have been nice to have sung with Nicole, but I got Ewan," he teases in broken English. "I met her in an Italian

restaurant in LA and we were speaking for a little while. She is so lovely and sweet – tall and very elegant."

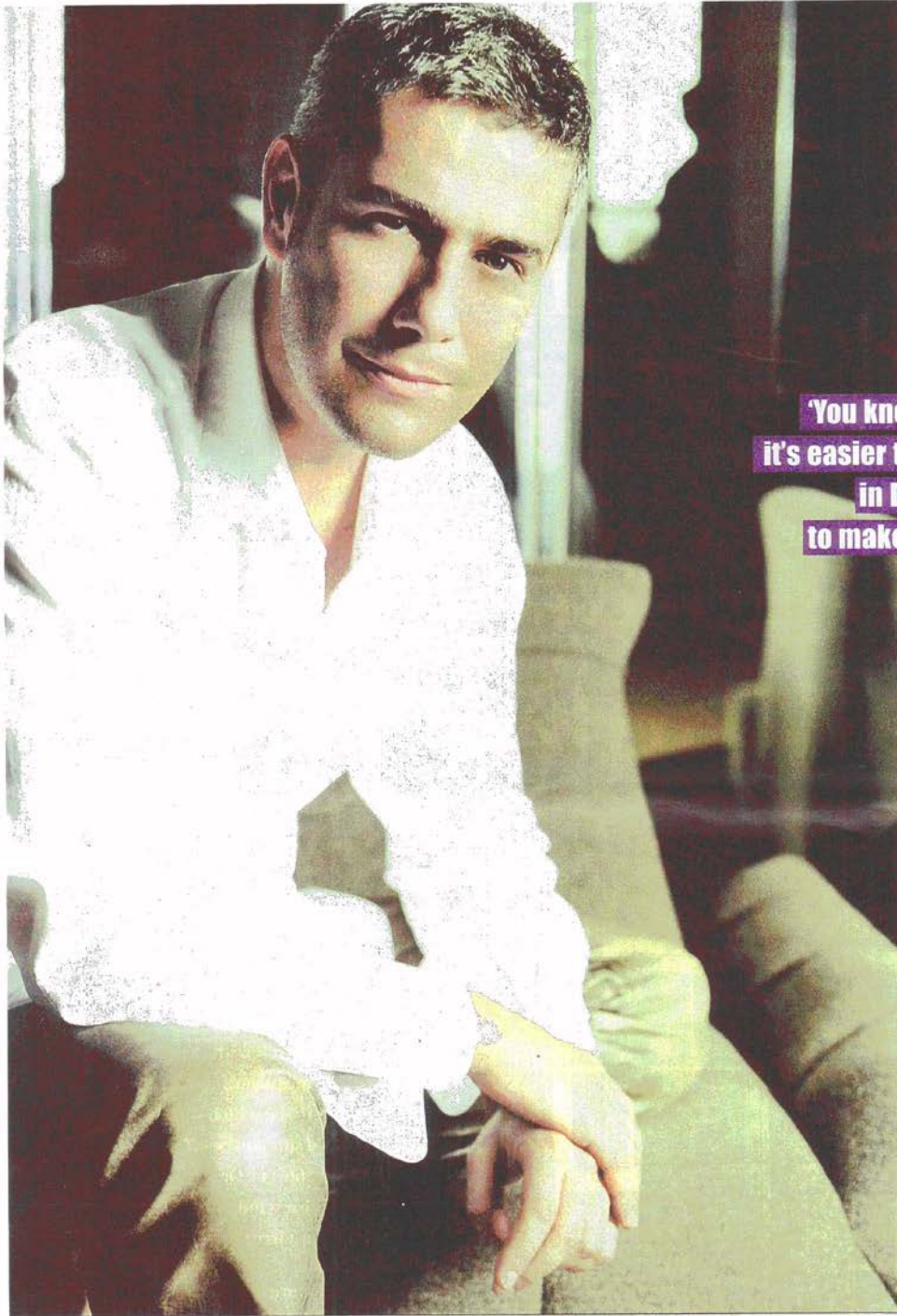
Despite being blessed with an incredible voice, it has not been an easy climb for this 36-year-old, slim-hipped, six-foot tenor. Born in 1963 in the quaint, medieval Tuscan town of Siena, he decided that he wanted to be a singer when he was just nine years old. But although his mother encouraged him to sing by playing opera all the time, his father was totally against the idea and it led to much family conflict.

Safina describes his father as "a bit

like Mussolini, very dictator-like", and says they have never had a good relationship. Since his father left his mother five years ago, Safina hasn't spoken to him.

"I was really close to my mother, and my father did it in a bad way," says Safina, who now lives in Rome. "He just left. He couldn't speak with me. He didn't tell me. But there are a lot of situations like that where a wife and husband don't have a good relationship and they live in a bad atmosphere. So it's better to split."

"My father is going through the male menopause. He's falling in love with



**'You know, for an Italian
it's easier to make pizza
in England than it is
to make music'**

young girls and he's going to the gym. It's a bit late – but it can happen in life."

His father wanted him to be a lawyer and for two years Safina studied law at his home-town university, but he knew he had to escape if he wanted to seriously pursue a singing career.

The opportunity arose when he turned 18 and left home to do his national service in the Florence Police Force. In the evenings, he took music and singing lessons. Then he won a major singing competition which opened the stage door and led to him working with opera greats such as Katia Ricciarelli. He also got a

grant to train in New York with the great Placido Domingo.

Nevertheless, it wasn't easy for Safina. "Money was always tight. Sometimes, I didn't have enough money for the rent, which would make me so nervous it affected my singing. I would pay for my music studies from the wages I was getting as a policeman in Florence."

On his splendid album *Insieme A Te*, which has gone double-platinum, Safina fuses opera with pop in what could loosely be called popopera – and sings a lot about love. It's a subject close to his heart at the moment. With his sudden

popularity and all the accompanying promotion he is currently undertaking, he is not able to see much of his girlfriend Lorenza, a dancer, he explains.

"Travelling affects our relationship so much. But she is an important love in my life. At the moment I'm very busy and it is a problem for us to be together. You cannot spend a lot of time with your love when you are constantly travelling. But it's the quality of love I think that is important – not the quantity.

"I have a great relationship with my girlfriend and my mother. My mother is not the typical Italian mama. I don't see

her often, but she is a good friend. In this business I think it is very important to keep your old friends. Nowadays, it's difficult for me because everything is moving so fast."

One day, he says, he would like to get married and have children. "It's not a good time at the moment. I have to be very committed to my work. But it would be nice to have some little Safinas around one day."

He is mobbed wherever he goes in Europe, particularly in Italy, Germany and Holland, with female fans throwing teddy bears and flowers onstage. "Underwear would be better," he says, laughing, although he is anxious to dispel any notion that he might be following in his father's footsteps. "There is a lot of temptation around, but you have to keep something serious for yourself."

His translator suddenly adds: "Everybody wants him, but nobody gets him. He sleeps by himself."

There has been much talk of Safina's physical resemblance to George Clooney, which amuses the handsome opera singer. "I don't see the similarity, but I have a friend in Rome who is very close to George Clooney and he says the same thing. I'm flattered. He's a beautiful man, so it's not a problem. Although I'm not so sure Clooney is happy about it."

"Anyway, I would rather people say that I look like George Clooney than Danny DeVito."

Safina knows that fame and money can be dangerous things to handle and modestly says he never listens to his own recordings at home. If marooned on a desert island his choices would be as diverse as Rachmaninov and U2.

"But I don't work to have fame," he says, earnestly. "I want to be satisfied in my life. I don't want to have any regrets. My father had a lot of regrets."

"You have to live the fame with your feet on the ground. There are a lot of people today who are very famous because they are a marketing product. I have worked like crazy for a long time, since I was 18, and I don't think fame can destroy me."

WLRN Television

George Clooney, Move Over... for Alessandro Safina



His striking good looks and intense gaze can mesmerize even from the two dimensional page of a press photo, but it is his voice and unique singing style that truly characterize Alessandro Safina.

Often compared to George Clooney, Safina responds, "I think he is not only a really good-looking guy but also a fine actor. I loved his performance in *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* If I met him, I would say Hey! You know you really look like Alessandro Safina."

Safina was born in Siena, Italy, in 1968, and grew up immersed in the traditions of opera. By the age of nine, he was dedicated to opera, but it was when he heard pop music for the first time at the age of seventeen that his true style began to emerge. After years of classical training, it was Genesis, The Clash, and specifically, U2 that began to influence Safina's style. To Safina, their music was full of soul just like opera.

"My idea was always to have a classical career," said Safina. "It's a new experience for me. The pop style, the pop attitude. We try to make something new. It's not easy today to realize something new."

Inspired by the crossover success of other young opera singers, Safina pursued his dream of a new style that would combine classical opera with pop music. To help him develop this new form, Safina teamed with renowned Italian musician and composer Romano Musumarra. Together, Safina and Musumarra created "pop-opera" - a combination of synthesized sounds, percussion band, a full symphony, choral voices, the composition of Musumarra and the voice of Safina. "Only You (Luna)" was the song that first brought Safina to the attention of pop fans in Italy.

Safina's musical idols match the range of pop-opera. "I am an absolute U2 fan. I just seem to identify with all their songs and really appreciate the musical quality of their albums. I love Shania Twain for many reasons, not the least being that she has a really powerful voice. Otherwise, I enjoy anything by Verdi, any recordings featuring Placido Domingo, and generally speaking, any music that gives me a sense of passion and emotion." Safina says, "Listening to a voice can be a highly emotive experience; this applies to classical as well as pop music in which artists answer to the same emotional requisites."

Safina's rich tenor voice and the romantic ballads of Musumarra will be aired as a part of PBS's Great Performances in December. Taped at the Ancient Greek Amphitheater in Taormina, Sicily, the concert includes "Only You (Luna)," "La Sete di Vivere (Thirst for Life)," "Aria e Memoria (Breath and Memory)," "Siena," "Il Mirto & La Rosa (Myrtle and Roses)," "Stu Bbene (Feeling Fine)," "Il Profumo del Cielo (Blue Heaven)," "Insieme A Te (Together With You)," "Arrivederci America," and "El Adiós (Take My Heart)."

Safina is very excited about his American debut on television. "I am absolutely thrilled about the whole thing. When I was a kid I always dreamed of America. It seemed such an unreachable country, like a dreamland in Cinemascope."

David Horn, producer of Great Performances, said "Alessandro is, indeed, one of a kind. He's got it all. The voice that is big, dark and sexy, plus incredible movie-star looks. It's exciting to hear a classically passionate voice breathe life into these new Italian songs."

With the striking good looks that cause drool to role from the mouths of females around the globe, a voice that fills the soul, and the emergence of pop-opera, George Clooney better move over... Alessandro Safina is coming to America.

Alessandro Safina In Concert: A "Great Performances" Special airs on WLRN Public Television Channel 17 on December 9th at 5:30 pm and 10 pm.