



Profile Of Len Triola

By Natalie Goldberg

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The legends of Tavern on the Green, Sinatra, and the 1980s version of the now gentrified Lower East Side are all true, says music icon Len Triola. I meet him at the legendary Joe Allen's, in the restaurant section of Times Square. He has his own table, which says it all: the man was, and always will be, a giant in the music world, and in the New York scene.

Currently a promoter, Triola, after years of grunt work, landed a gig at hot and happening radio station, WNEW, in 1982. It was here that he became acquainted with legends, most famously, Frank Sinatra, although he also holds the late Nancy LaMott close to his heart. Triola is filled with stories of lavish, scandalous parties at Tavern on the Green, where he served as musical director, and memories of the then-rough, magical area below Houston. "The difference [about the Lower East Side] back then, was that you didn't go down there, you couldn't, you just didn't," Triola reminisces, biting into a cheeseburger. However, Triola was one of the many success stories who did venture down into the danger zone, and has a plethora of life experiences to show for it. "Everything was booming, the CD was coming out, I met Elton, I met Yoko Ono, Paul McCartney, I met all of them...one day, Island Records brought in some group with some guy named Bono in it...it was U2." Not a bad gig.

"Everyone, when they're young, wants to come to New York, come work in the city...I started working in this city in 1979...you get here, and you realize it's not what you thought." Triola, a native of New York state, has every reason to romanticize this city. He's lived ten lives in one, and become a part of so many others' lives as well. You can't talk about the life of Triola without talking about the life of Frank Sinatra. "I used to bring Sinatra records to school," Triola smiles, "I've loved Sinatra for as long as I can remember." After their lifelong friendship, camaraderie, and partnership, one might imagine that Triola has difficulty finding new artists compatible with him, that he has impenetrable criteria. "I just have to listen to it, and like it," he says, "when you've been doing this as long as I have, you just know when it's right."

From swing to Broadway to Ella Fitzgerald, Triola has mastered the art of working with big names, being versatile in doing that, and becoming something of a celebrity himself. "You just get lucky, and you get on a roll, you know?" Triola chuckles, but he knows that people will constantly want to work with him because he is one of the few individuals in that business who actually LIKES people (imagine that?!). "Anybody I meet, I get along with." Triola has an intoxicating air about him that reflects someone who has seen and done more than his fair share, but isn't at all jaded by it. It's about the music for Triola, but it's also about the memories, the risks. Sinatra is his best example of a life that wasn't just an existence..."he drank, he smoked, he carried on-but he lived to be 82...he could have been a boring guy, and lived to 100, but I think this way is better."

Boredom has certainly never been on Triola's agenda. "You have to embrace every era. I love today, just as much as I loved it then. Have fun, and don't say no." As to whether or not he still loves what he does, Triola confirms, "it's not work if you like it." He considers New York to be the greatest place in the world, quoting his confidante, Sinatra, "if you can make it here, you can make it anywhere." Triola has proven this to be the case in his undeniable successes, but he has one more goal before the day is done. He aspires to learn some piano. I let him know that at least he has the right connections, to which he responds..."first, you gotta play. If you can't play, it doesn't matter who you know." Up and coming artists, take note! .