

# Amante: He's no Tom Jones

By KEITH POWERS

Symphony Hall, in its century-long history, has hosted car exhibitions, fashion shows, temperance revivals, carnivals and many other nonmusical events — besides, of course, unforgettable classical performances. Last evening our great hall hosted yet another non-musical event, an appearance by tenor Michael Amante and his orchestra.

## Music Review

Amante was introduced by a mysterious benefactor, who had obviously funded the event (the hall was way less than half full, so ticket sales were not a factor).

Amante comes prepackaged as "the next Bocelli," or "the modern-day Mario Lanza." As if. Our miked-up heartthrob bellowed through a couple hours of mixed

*Tenor Michael Amante in recital last night at Symphony Hall.*

repertory from Puccini to Tom Jones with nary a musical moment worth noticing.

His "orchestra" (forgive the quotes marks, please, but that's what he called it) was merely a retirement-home band, a group of winds backed by a rock 'n' roll drummer. They sounded like a typing pool.

Amante himself has the musical ability of a pond of frogs in heat. His groaning into the microphone drove this listener to seek refuge in the back of the hall midway through the set.

His style and manner were self-referential — "everyone loves me, right?" seemed to be the pass-words. His mistakes: singing loud and high with musical accompaniment.

OK, let's find some highlights.

I'm thinking. I'm still thinking. OK, there weren't any. The show was full of missed entrances, off-key playing and singing, instruments that didn't work, and bad pacing.

A guest appearance by a spaghetti-strapped vixen was comic. "I always invite someone local to sing with me," Amante said, introducing a singer this listener had never seen, and who didn't even seem to know the music.

If all else fails, focus on kitsch. When Amante broke out Tom Jones' "Delilah," ripping off his tie to the delight of some females in attendance, this listener was ready for some action. But as Amante himself pointed out, most of his groupies are in their 80s or 90s. It takes more than three minutes to rip off those Depends and hurl them onstage, so no such underwear rain was forthcoming.

Damn. I was ready for a little excitement.