

Family Concert Tribute

to

Ted Unseth

July 5, 2013

Lake Harriet Pavilion

Minneapolis, MN

7:30 – 9:00 PM

Master of Ceremonies:

05/26/13

--Long Version—

Show Opener:

01. Dudley Do Right tag

Greetings Everyone. Welcome to the “**Family Concert Tribute to Ted Unseth**”. My name is Daniel and I’m going to be introducing most of the performances tonight. To save time, I’m not going to introduce the participants for each tune, but you can access all pertinent information at this easy to remember website:

tedeboy.net

That's "ted-e-boy" one word, dot net. Those of you with smart phones can access that at any time, but I'm going to ask you to do so for a particular segment later on, also.

This evening is all about a man most of us here call "Uncle Ted", even though technically, he's my Granduncle. It should be fairly obvious that a person my age won't have had much experience with Uncle Ted's Musical Odyssey; but over the past year-and-a-half, I've learned a lot and am pleased to be part of this tribute.

Many of you will know Ted Unseth as the Founder and Director of the Americana Classic Jazz Orchestra (formerly the Wolverines Classic Jazz Orchestra). This year will mark the 40th Anniversary for the ACJO and we're going to

pay tribute to some of Uncle Ted's note-for-note transcriptions of classic American Jazz Orchestra recordings. In the words of Uncle Ted:

“If you look at these arrangements from a Classical music approach, they have great variety and creativity—each one qualifying as a Classic Jazz Mini Concerto.”

And in the words of Minnesota's Stride Piano Master, Butch Thompson:

“Ted is a fantastic transcriber and you've got to admire him for sticking to his guns all these years and standing for what he stands for, which is that old recording Feel that is very difficult to capture.”

We will most definitely feature these, but I also want to point out that Uncle Ted has worn several Musical Hats over the years. And we're

going to pay tribute to them all. Starting with his initial debut onto the Twin Cities Music Scene as:

Ted Unseth: Singer/Songwriter

I'm going to ask you all to do this:

Imagine it's the summer of 1972 and we're at the New Riverside Café' on the West Bank of the U of MN campus in Minneapolis. We're attending a rare public performance of Ted Unseth's original Singer/Songwriter material. The instrumentation tonight has been augmented to include instruments Ted would have added if he'd had the wherewithal back then. And it starts like this:

A young man has fallen head-over-heels in love and this is how it felt:

02. Braggadocio

This next number is not necessarily autobiographical, but is close to Ted's heart. It's dedicated to all animals who have suffered human indifference and cruelty:

03. Hey There, Dog

We are now going to do a bit more Imagining. We're going to imagine these next two numbers were on the original program. They would have been if Ted would have had the resources. They are a loving tribute to the Norwegian heritage that we all share here onstage. In my great-grandmother's family tree is the inventor of the Norwegian fiddle, called the *Hardingfele* (hardung-fay-leh), or Hardanger Fiddle.

This first number is well known in Norway. It was written by a man they called The Miller's

Boy. In his youth, he was in love with a young Norwegian girl, but she didn't return the favor and decided to marry another man. In the most honorable fashion, The Miller's Boy wrote this for the newlyweds and played it as they all marched to the church.

04. Myllargutens Brudemars

(or The Miller's Boy Wedding March)

This next number is taken from a recording Uncle Ted made in 1971 of the #1 Champion Norwegian Fiddler at the time, Torleiv (tor-life) Bolstad. There was a free concert at the U of MN Architecture Court of a Norwegian Folk Troupe and Mr. Bolstad played this, his signature tune: The "Valdres Springar"—the unofficial theme tune for the Valdres region of Norway. This is inventive Norwegian Folk Fiddling at its best; and it was performed while a

male dancer was doing the *Hallingdans*—at one point the dancer kicks a hat off of a broomstick handle while doing a backflip and catching it before it hits the ground—at this point, you’ll hear a ‘zing’ moment where Mr. Bolstad timed it exactly as the hat was being kicked.

05. Valdres Springar

Next, we’re going to feature something that *was* on the original set list. Originally, it was intended to be a fantasy of a young Norwegian lad serenading his sweetheart; but has now been expanded for this concert to reflect the singular beauty of Norway itself. It’s called “*Kjaerlighet*” (shire-lee-get) and means “Beloved”:

06. Kjaerlighet

Remember, it's the summer of 1972 and we're at the New Riverside Café'. In the audience is a good friend who is spending his last night in Minneapolis—about to leave for California and a new life. Ted wrote this for his pal Jimmy and sprang it on him that night:

07. Jimmy And The Chrysler

Uncle Ted featured original material almost exclusively, but couldn't pass up this tribute to Ramblin' Jack Elliott, Ted's favorite Singer/Songwriter at the time. This is Ramblin' Jack's take on the old standby **“In The Shade Of The Old Apple Tree”**.

Watch out now, I'm going to take a crack at this one myself; backed up by my dad on Guitar:

08. The Old Apple Tree

This last number for the Singer/Songwriter portion of the program actually occurred at the Firehouse (now the Mixed Blood Theatre) in 1973. It was the last Singer/Songwriter gig for Uncle Ted and the first gig for his Classic Jazz Orchestra; which meant he was the warm-up act for the band. This selection was a transition from the Singer/Songwriter to the Classic Jazz and was originally performed by Ted on Piano and Joe Demko (remember that name—Joe is playing guitar and singing better than ever nowadays) on Bass:

10. One O'Clock Leap

This ends the Singer/Songwriter portion of the program; and we're now going to transition to another of Uncle Ted's Musical Hats:

Ted Unseth, Composer/Arranger

When conditions were conducive, Uncle Ted worked at original music composition. These all were originally scored in the 1970's and re-scored in the past several years.

The first is called “*Dolcezza*” (Italian for “sweetness”). It’s short, sweet and dedicated to an Italian friend and ends with an imaginary bird singing “Good day to you, Carla.”

11. Dolcezza

For this next number, imagine it’s a summer evening, late at night; and there’s a light rain falling; and you’re seated at your bedroom window looking out, imagining what might have been:

12. Punko

As Monty Python used to say, “Now for something completely different...”. Uncle Ted thought he’d try writing in the style of an imaginary 1920’s Jazz orchestra, employing some of the devices he learned such as sub-themes and modulating to different keys. What he ended up with was something else. So, imagine this being a specialty item for a wind ensemble. It’s called:

13. Minor Fantasy

Ted Unseth, Composer. Uncle Ted says that’s all he ever wanted to be, anyway. And in the 1970’s, Ted found time to score several original compositions for Classical Orchestra. I’m pleased to announce that Ted’s “Concertino” was premiered last April 27th by the Minnesota Sinfonia, So, here’s our ensemble version of the

first movement, originally sketched 40 years ago. Imagine an East European folk ensemble ‘jamming’ on an unusual time signature combination: 7/8, 3/4, 7/8, 3/4, 2/4, 5/8:

14. Concertino – M1

Ted Unseth, Arranger:

Uncle Ted has devoted most of the last 40 years to transcribing and arranging American Jazz Orchestra recordings. In that tradition of paying homage to great American composers and arrangers, this next number is a snippet from a composition by... now hear this... America’s Greatest Composer: Charles Ives. “Charles Who?” you might ask. Well, for those of you who don’t know, contrary to popular notion, Charles Ives is really the Father of 20th Century Music, not Igor Stravinsky (all due respect to the great Stravinsky). Ives was writing what we’d

call Progressive Music long before Stravinsky. A case in point is this snippet from his “Country Band March” written in 1904—it employs musical devices unheard of in its day, but perfectly acceptable years later. This is a note-for-note transcription, but with one exception: Uncle Ted added a Hip Drummer to the mix. Imagine this snippet being a half-time Marching Band feature at a college football game:

15. Country Band Fanfare

Chorus

We’re going to switch gears again now and feature a few Choral selections that Uncle Ted has always had great respect for.

The first is by, and I quote Uncle Ted, “the greatest composer that ever lived”, Johann

Sebastian Bach. Husband to two wives (one at a time; he wore the first one out), father to 20 children and still able to compose a body of work that is copied, reproduced and revered by more musicians than any other composer. And Uncle Ted, being the son of a Lutheran minister, likes to point out that The Great Bach was (yes, that's right Garrison) a Lutheran!

This is what Bach could do to a simple melody that all Lutherans at that time would be familiar with--harmonize it unlike any other:

16. Es Ist Genug or, in English: "It Is Enough".

There is a traditional Russian Orthodox hymn that Uncle Ted sang in High School choir in Albert Lea, MN. He's never forgotten it and we present it to you now. In Russian, it's "**Gospodi Pomilui**" (gos-poe-dee poe-meel oo-ee); in

English it's "Lord Have Mercy". The chord progression and dynamics are truly special.

17. Gospodi Pomilui

Many churches and concert halls have natural acoustics that carry the sound throughout the room—natural echo. A long time ago (the late 1500's), a Flemish composer named Orlando di Lasso noted this phenomenon in his whimsical composition called "**The Echo Song**". Yes, he actually wrote "ha, ha, ha, ha, ha" into the score:

18. Echo Song

And now, for something even more completely different, Uncle Ted wanted to pay tribute to the ground-breaking Modern Jazz Quartet. It's said that they brought Jazz out of the basement and into the concert hall. This is a treatment similar

to what the original Swingle Singers did with their two Scat Albums dedicated to J.S. Bach. The MJQ dedicated the composition to a Jazz Guitarist Uncle Ted says is the greatest that ever lived: Django (jong-go) Reinhardt. This is just the first verse, but will give you a taste for what this great Jazz group produced.

19. Django

We now to turn to our last category that has been Uncle Ted's major focus for the past 40 years:

Classic Jazz

We'll begin with an early influence on Jazz players, Rudy Wiedoeft. He was not a Jazz player per se, but he made the Alto Saxophone a household word by way of his popular

recordings of the 19-teens. Here's a sample from his 1918 hit

20. Saxophobia

Fast-forward about 20 years and we've got a group many called "The Greatest Little Jazz Band": the John Kirby Sextet. Consisting mostly of alumnae from the legendary Fletcher Henderson Orchestra, they produced a fascinating library of creative arrangements. And, on several occasions, they featured references to well-known Classical themes. Thus this 1939 tip of the Jazz hat to the main theme of the 2nd Movement of Beethoven's "7th Symphony" called

21. Beethoven Riffs On

Most everyone is familiar with the name Duke Ellington—a one-of-a-kind legendary Jazz composer and bandleader. With a career spanning more than 6 decades, the Duke produced an amazing library of musical gems. We're going to feature an early Duke Ellington arrangement from 1929; and it's called the

22. Stevedore Stomp

Does the name Clarence Williams ring a bell? How about Clarence Williams the 3rd? That's right, he played Link in the 1960's TV series "Mod Squad". His grandfather was Clarence Williams the 1st—a very successful music composer, arranger and publisher in the 1920's. Famous for his small band recordings, he also produced a recording session with expanded instrumentation that featured a number of arrangements he scored for an off-Broadway musical called "Bottomlands". Here is one

selection from that series titled “Beaucoup Jack”, which is Jazz slang for “lots of money”:

23. Beaucoup Jack

Uncle Ted tells me the Fletcher Henderson Orchestra is his favorite Jazz band from the Early Days. At one point in the late 1920’s, Fletcher’s band was the one every Jazz player hoped to join; and the story goes that new players would head over to a special Monday night club for jam sessions where Fletcher Henderson might be playing billiards. It would appear that Fletcher wasn’t paying attention to the music onstage, but if a player impressed him enough, he would stop in the middle of a shot and turn his head towards the stage—that one simple gesture usually meant “you’re hired.” We’re going to feature a Fletcher Henderson arrangement in the early 1930’s Jump style. A

simple title, but a uniquely creative arrangement called

24. Sweet Music

The Jimmie Lunceford Orchestra was famous for their onstage showmanship in the 1930's and '40's; but they were also loaded with talented arrangers and players. Here's an early '30's arrangement with the blistering title:

25. Flaming Reeds & Screaming Brass

Few will recognize this next name: Gene Kardos, a relatively obscure bandleader from the Bronx. In the late 1920's the Gene Kardos Orchestra scored a hit with their version of "The Varsity Drag" that was featured in a major motion picture. Specializing in novelty arrangements geared mostly to the college

crowd, they produced some very interesting music. We're going to feature one of those arrangements and I'm going to let Uncle Ted join us for this one:

Ted:

Here's where I'm going to ask those of you with Smart Phones to dial this Internet address up:

tedeboy.net

Once there, scroll all the way down to selection #26 called "**Sell It**"; and be ready for Audience Participation at sections '**H**' and '**J**'. When we get to those points, I will cue you to join-in on these Background Gang Vocals.

OK, here we go:

26. Sell It

H: Sell It! Bail out! Pay it off! Sold! Yes!

J: Bite it! Whack it! Attack it! Nurse! Yow!

Duke Ellington, yes of course; but how about Duke Ellington and the Mills Brothers? Uncle Ted has had this on in mind for a long time and we can present it to you now. 1929 and...

27. Digga Digga Doo

Now for the last piece on our program, I'll give you a few hints and you can figure the title out yourselves:

--Paul Whiteman Orchestra;

--Bing Crosby & the Rhythm Boys;

--1928; and...

--“What’s at the bottom of the Mississippi River?”

28. Mississippi Mud

One last thing before we go:

We'd like to celebrate 3 Birthdays:

--Ross Weseloh—born July 4th;

--Dani _____'s daughter—born July 5th; and

--Oh yes: July 5th today is Uncle Ted's 67th

Birthday:

Happy Birthday sing-along

We thank you so much for being here tonight.

You've helped make this a truly memorable occasion. And remember:

“Old clarinet players never die; they just break wind.”

Show Closer:

29. Perry Mason tag

Encore (if there's time):

Saxophobia