

WAYNE'S MUSIC WORLD: \$

By Wayne Corey, FFS Wisconsin

BURIED FF TREASURES UNEARTHED!



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Ross Barbour and Ken Albers wrote the most remarkable song you have never heard. Until now. **Night Time** is featured on *Unsung*, the new album by the born-again Faux Freshmen. The unveiling of **Night Time** is, in the opinion of this writer, an event of remarkable historical importance in our Four Freshmen Society corner of the world.

The Faux Freshmen enjoyed a fifteen year hiatus. They have returned with a marvelous CD featuring ten songs with arrangements written for, but never recorded by, the Four Freshmen. The story behind the music is great. The music is even better.

Mary Flanigan and Nancy Albers sent a lot of historic FF material to David Bentley after the passing of their legendary husbands, Bob Flanigan and Ken Albers. Dave, the FFS board member whose history with the Freshmen goes back many decades, found "priceless charts" among those treasures. Some of those charts had never been sung or recorded. One of them was **Night Time**, composed and arranged by Ken Albers with lyrics by Ross Barbour.

Let that sink in for a moment. A new song, a great song, composed and arranged by Kenny with lyrics by Ross. It is a wonderful new gift for devoted Four Freshmen fans.

Four years ago Dave Bentley enlisted former Freshman Garry Lee Rosenberg to help put together a new version of the Faux Freshmen. Dave was again ready to put his money where his heart is.

Night Time, the unknown and mostly unheard Ken Albers-Ross Barbour composition, stuns a first-time listener, including producer Garry Lee Rosenberg. **Night Time** is, to me, the best cut on the album. It's just an absolutely gorgeous tune. I don't know why it was never recorded. That tune is gorgeous beyond all description. As soon as I heard it I (thought) 'Wow! This tune is just phenomenal.'

"They sang it once in Tokyo in 1977, and Ross told me it just didn't work. No explanation why," adds David Bentley.

News that a "new" Ken Albers-Ross Barbour song has been discovered and recorded is enough to send the heart of any Freshmen fan into overdrive. It is even more exciting to learn that ten never-before-recorded FF charts are now available thanks to Dave, Garry Lee and the Faux Freshmen. Garry Lee produced *Unsung*. He takes responsibility for, as we used to say, what's in the grooves. Dave is the executive producer.

The Faux Freshmen made their debut in 1999 with a tribute to Ken Albers entitled *Scratchin' the Surface*. The album featured ten "shining" Ken Albers arrangements. The Faux – Dave Bentley, singer Dave Rowland and former Freshmen Garry Lee Rosenberg and Rod Henley – made their stage debut at that year's FFS convention. The Faux struck again in 2000 with *Seasons of the Heart*, a Bill Comstock tribute. That album had five of Bill's compositions and six other songs identified with that great gentleman of jazz. But after their big splash the Faux Freshmen faded from the recording scene while remaining in the memories and on the playlists of a lot of FF fans. Four years ago the thoughts of a rebirth began.

The names of the *Unsung* arrangers are mostly familiar and, indeed, legendary. Dick Reynolds, Ken Albers, Bill Comstock and Greg Stegeman are major contributors. John Oddo's **Close Your Eyes** uses an opening sixteen bar instrumental quote from "Topsy," the swinger made famous by Count Basie and Cozy Cole. Oddo has been music director for Rosemary Clooney, Michael Feinstein and Linda Eder, among his long list of credits.

The *Unsung* songs and their arrangers include:

- 1 **A Lovely Way To Spend An Evening** – Dick Reynolds
- 2 **America The Beautiful** – Ross Barbour
- 3 **Night Time** – Ken Albers
- 4 **Prelude To A Kiss** – Bill Comstock
- 5 **Willow Weep For Me** – Dick Reynolds
- 6 **Don't Go To Strangers** – Greg Stegeman
- 7 **Close Your Eyes** – John Oddo
- 8 **Yesterday** – Dick Reynolds
- 9 **Nocturne In Blue** – Ken Albers
- 10 **I Wish You Love** – Bill Comstock

All of these charts are wonderful. Ross Barbour wrote the **America the Beautiful** arrangement in his final months as a personal favor for Dave Bentley. Those of us who were fortunate to know him will say that, yes, that sounds just like something Ross would do.

I knew Bill Comstock did **Prelude to a Kiss** before I looked at the list of arrangers. Bill's affection for Duke Ellington and his music runs deep. Bill also did the chart for the wonderful Keely Smith theme, **I Wish You Love**. Dick Reynolds has three of the arrangements including what Garry Lee calls a "monster chart" on **Willow Weep for Me**. Garry Lee and Dave both talk about the remarkable difficulty of wrapping four voices around that arrangement. Ken Albers' **Nocturne in Blue** is a beautiful arrangement of a beautiful, albeit little known, song. Greg Stegeman revives **Don't Go to Strangers** in classic Freshmen fashion.

The Reynolds vocal arrangement of **Yesterday** gives new life to the old and over-recorded Paul McCartney chestnut. With Reynolds' pen **Yesterday** becomes a fresh and exciting song. Why was it never recorded by the Freshmen?

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