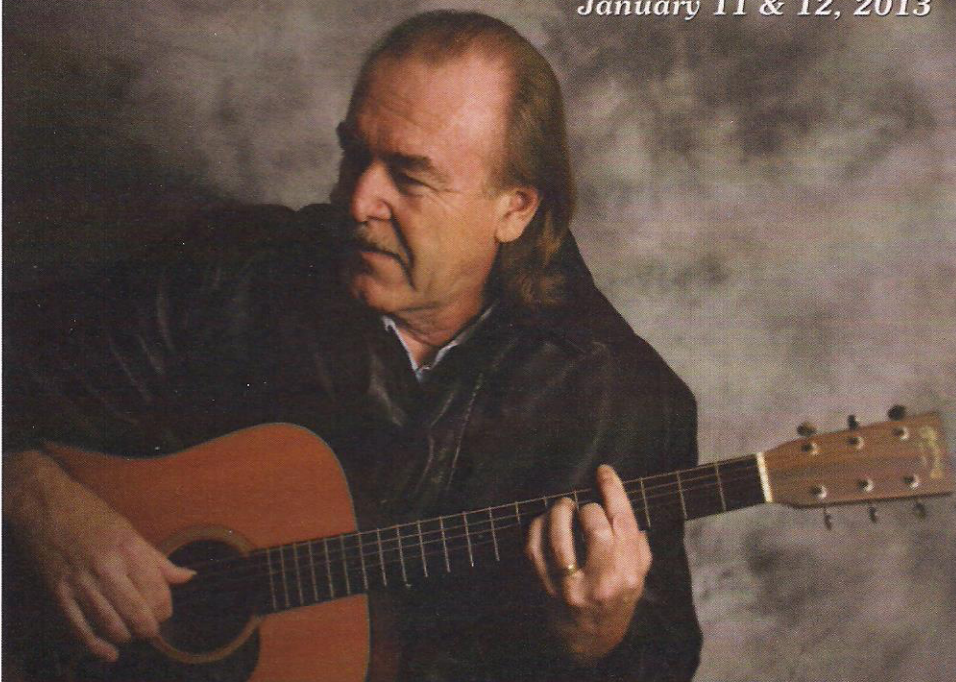


Symphonic Lightfoot!

January 11 & 12, 2013

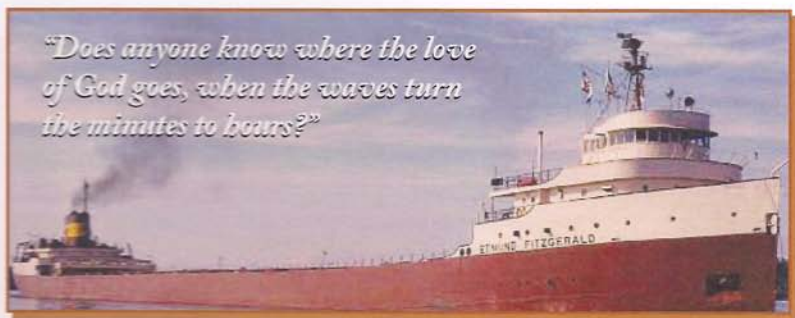


"WHISPERS OF THE NORTH"

The
**GORDON
LIGHTFOOT**
TRIBUTE
with Orchestra



*"Does anyone know where the love
of God goes, when the waves turn
the minutes to hours?"*



The Edmund Fitzgerald

It is undeniably through Gordon Lightfoot's haunting ballad, "The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald," that more people know of the events of Nov. 10, 1975, than anything else.

The tragedy attracted news coverage in the Great Lakes states, got a brief mention on national network TV news, and merited stories in several publications – including Newsweek magazine – that told the story of the sinking of the Fitzgerald. It was the Newsweek piece that provided most of the factual material that Lightfoot included in the song.

Today the ship's bell from the Edmund Fitzgerald is on permanent display at the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum at Whitefish Point, Mich., retrieved from the grave of the 29 lost sailors at the request of their families and replaced with a commemorative replica bell inscribed with the names of the captain and crew.

Lightfoot has maintained a relationship with the surviving families, and annually donates scholarship

funding to the Great Lakes Maritime Academy in Traverse City, Mich. The tribute band Whispers of the North has played the song at the last two memorial bell-ringing services at the museum and has met with relatives of those lost with the ship.

"It's quite a humbling experience, actually, to be asked to play Gord's song for those families," said Mike Fornes after the 2012 event. "It's an honor, and I could see that the guys in our band felt the same way. We owe a lot to the song, and we owe a lot to Gord. It's our privilege to stand in for Gord at an event like this. We all know what November storms are like on the lakes and the Shipwreck Museum is a special place for us."



Marga Eickholt - Orchestral Arrangements

Marga Eickholt remembers her 8th grade year as being a pivotal one in her music education.

"I started playing cello in 8th grade," recalls Marga, a Saginaw, Mich., native. "My sister, Esther, played violin and she got me involved in orchestra. Then I dragged my younger sister, Susan, into it on string bass when she was old enough."

Eickholt went to Central Michigan University and the University of Michigan to study music and went on to perform with orchestras in Saginaw and Midland. Like several of the orchestral performers on stage tonight, she is currently a member of the Great Lakes Chamber Orchestra.

"I've always liked Gordon Lightfoot," says the Indian River resident.

"I've always thought it was such honest music. It's hard for musicians to put details of their lives out there in music for everyone to see."

The lyrics were as inspiring as the music when it came to transposing hits like "The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald" and "Sundown" to orchestral scores for the "Symphonic Lightfoot" shows.

"I think Gord has a lot of love in his heart," Marga said. "I don't think he would write like this if he didn't feel it. Some of these songs I had never heard before and now a lot of them have become my favorite songs. There's a lot of nostalgia. This music has great lyrics and beautiful harmonies."



Members of the Orchestra

Prudence Kurtz, violin – East Jordan
Maggie Poxson, violin – Petoskey
Kathy Volke, violin – Traverse City
Lorna Uber, violin – Cheboygan
Margaret Beck, viola – East Jordan
Marga Eickholt, cello – Indian River
Bonnietta R. Benn, flute – Alanson
John McCutcheon, oboe – Charlevoix

George Krawczyk - Keyboards

The question begs for an answer: Why would a musician who has performed the music of Broadway shows in local theater, composed children's musical comedies and holds down a full-time job of directing choirs, musicians and playing a mighty Allen church organ for the largest congregation within his community want an additional gig playing Gordon Lightfoot's keyboard parts?

"It scratches an itch," said George Krawczyk, who tonight directs an orchestral section and a bell choir in the musical parts he usually plays for *Whispers of the North*. "Bach, polka music and sacred music all do things. This is part of that musical universe. Playing with a band allows me to do things I can't do alone."



After seeing Lightfoot perform at Ann Arbor in the early 1980s, Krawczyk said he was intrigued by the philosophy of the Canadian icon's music.

"There's a Northern quality to it," said Krawczyk, who lives on the Lake Huron shore. "I often hear the water, waves and wind even when he's not talking about it in his songs. There's an elegance in the way Gord wrote these lines and the way his band plays them."

George collaborated with Marga Eickholt to write orchestral parts for tonight's show, a mission as challenging as playing Mike Heffernan's keyboard lines on hits

like "If You Could Read My Mind," "Canadian Railroad Trilogy" and "Softly."

"I have to think more orchestrally," Krawczyk said of the "Symphonic Lightfoot" project, where he has written for glockenspiel, tubular bells and hand bells. "You're painting a backdrop with this music. You get to use some fun sounds to create this music."

The "Belles" of St. Mary's

Mary Crusoe

Cheryl Faircloth

Charlotte Kosanke

Jill Kwiatkowski

Norma Lange

Christy McKillip

Lori Parsons

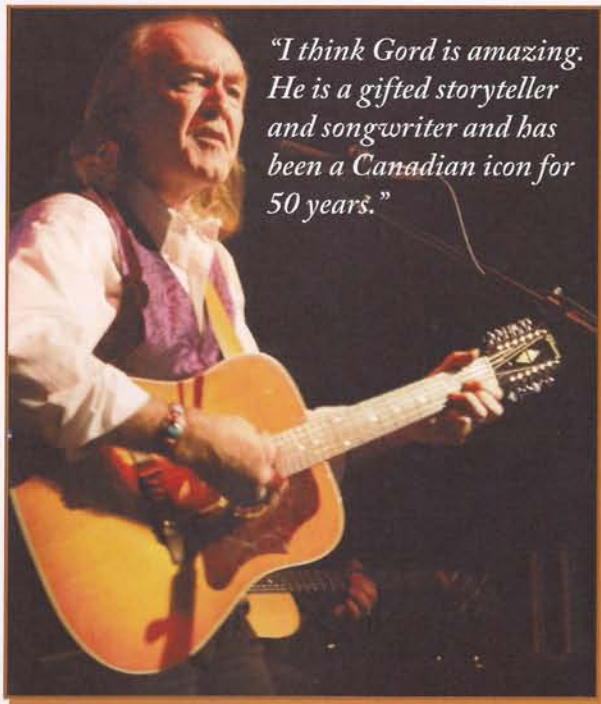
Elizabeth Schaefer

Teresa Woodgate-Proctor

Mike Fornes - Vocals, 6 & 12 String Guitars Appearing as Gordon Lightfoot

Five years in, and Mike Fornes is more enthusiastic than ever about playing the role of Gordon Lightfoot in a show that continues to reach new heights. Tonight's performance marks Mike's fifth appearance at the Cheboygan Opera House – a venue that is on its way to becoming the “home theater” to Mike that Toronto's Massey Hall is to Gord.

“The first show in 2008 was to be a one-time thing, a fund-raiser for the Opera House when state funding for the arts was cut,” Fornes recalled. “The Benefit Concert Series had begun and I more or less responded to a dare to try and put on a show to raise money for them. We had so much fun that we did a second show in 2009 and Whispers of the North was on its way.”



“I think Gord is amazing. He is a gifted storyteller and songwriter and has been a Canadian icon for 50 years.”

The performances established attendance records that enabled the band to donate more than \$9,000 to the Opera House along with badly needed new

main speakers and stage monitors that are now in use.

The band's bookings have steadily increased with theater concerts, casinos, county fairs, group tour and convention work adding to solo shows by Mike that numbered 50 performances in 2012 with plans to continually increase the schedule.

The “Lightfoot” look is very different for Fornes, who presented a clean-cut, coat and tie image at work every day during his 26-year career in professional hockey, calling the play-by-play for the National Hockey League's Hartford Whalers, Washington Capitals and Dallas Stars.

“I get teased about the hair around town sometimes,” Fornes laughed, “usually by women with hair shorter than mine. I think once people see the show they understand the role I'm playing on stage. It's funny how many people call me ‘Gord’ now.”

“I think Gord is amazing. He is a gifted storyteller and songwriter and has been a Canadian icon for 50 years. I am not Gordon Lightfoot, but I have so much respect for him and want to keep his music going. I do the best I can at looking the part and playing the music the way he does. I have both of the acoustic guitars he uses and that helps with the sound. Singing like him is not as easy. Gord has a very distinctive voice; a beautiful singing voice even today at 74 years old.”

Of course, the show is more than just Mike playing Gord. The other four members of Whispers of the North also play the roles of Lightfoot's band members using authentic instruments and effects.

“The guys are great; they really enjoy the music and the challenge of re-creating Gord's stage show,” Mike explained. “We want audiences to feel they've experienced the next best thing, and maybe for a moment be immersed enough in the music that we can create that illusion for them.”

