

HELEN WELCH in Superstar: The Carpenters Reimagined
Friday, October 23, 2020 - 7:30pm
Stocker Arts Center - Hoke Theatre

Produced by.....Helen Welch
Musical Director.....Joe Leaman
Bass/Vocals/Copyist.....Bryan Thomas
Drums/Percussion/Vocals.....Anthony Taddeo
Guitar/Vocals.....Charlie Trenta
Management: Howard Perl Management

From Helen...

Growing up I now realize how lucky I was to be surrounded by many different genres of music from opera to jazz to flamenco and country music. I would borrow my Mum's Carpenters cassette tapes and play them over and over in my bedroom. I loved these songs with Richard's lush arrangements, Karen's warm alto voice and the delicious harmonies they created.

As a teenager and young adult, I admit I was a CCF (Closet Carpenters fan!!), but visiting friends' houses I would often notice a Carpenters CD in their collections. The Carpenters seem to be everyone's 'guilty pleasure'.

In 2003, I moved to the USA and one night at my weekly jazz club residency, I decided to sing a Carpenters song. It was the first time I'd ever sung a Carpenters song in public. I will never forget the reaction of the crowd and their enthusiasm after I'd finished singing. I tried singing that same song in some other venues and the reaction was always the same - overwhelming enthusiasm for the music of this brother-sister duo. It was then that the idea for this show began to formulate.

Since then the production and content of "Superstar" has taken many twists and turns and undergone many changes and re-writes. I didn't want to do a tribute show and try to sound or look like the Carpenters. We wanted to celebrate the amazing catalog of songs and share some of the fascinating stories of how these songs came to be. We had what we call a 'champagne problem'; the Carpenters have so much good material it was hard to know what to leave out!

Now "Superstar. The Carpenters Reimagined" is touring around the United States and my musicians and I are witnessing firsthand the incredible reactions of you our audiences and the joy that this music brings.

Thank you for joining us for this special show. We dare you not to sing along!

ABOUT HELEN WELCH

Helen is an internationally acclaimed vocalist, entertainer, producer and bandleader. Her unique talent for arranging songs to make them her own, coupled with her ability to intimately engage her audience, has quickly earned her a large and devoted following around the globe. A native of England, Helen began her career on television's *Romper Room*. Since her early success she has headlined with world-class organizations such as the BBC Big Band, Glenn Miller Europe, Opus One and others at some of the UK's most prestigious venues including: The Ritz, The Savoy, Blenheim Palace, The Grosvenor House Great Room, Claridges and many theatres in London's West End. Additionally, she held starring roles in a variety of popular musicals including *Hello Dolly!*, *Barnum*, *Carousel*, *42nd Street*, *Calamity Jane* and *Oliver Twist*.

After a very successful run in the U.K., Helen relocated to the United States to guest star in the Broadway musical *Smokey Joe's Café*. Her success awarded her opportunities to sing with the Blossom Festival Orchestra, Grant Park Symphony Orchestra (Chicago), the Florida Symphony, the Columbus Jazz Orchestra and more. Since that time Helen has been producing and starring in a number of her own shows for Cleveland's Playhouse Square, the Akron Civic Theatre, the Chautauqua Institution, E.J. Thomas Hall, Breckenridge Summer Festival and a whole host of other venues across the country. She is repeatedly asked to return to venues in which she has performed.

In 2006, Helen produced her big band CD "One Dream" using the nationally renowned Cleveland Jazz Orchestra. Rosemary Riddle, daughter of famed arranger Nelson Riddle, gave Helen the original Nelson Riddle arrangement of *Zing Went the Strings of My Heart* for her to perform and record on this CD. Apart from Judy Garland, Helen is the only other vocalist to have used and performed this arrangement on a recording and she still uses it today in her big band performances.

Helen also performs three of her other shows with orchestras using her world-class symphony arrangements and has performed with many different symphony orchestras throughout the U.S. and in England. Helen was invited twice to perform with the Blossom Festival Orchestra, which is part of the Cleveland Orchestra. For these particular concerts, the Ella Fitzgerald Foundation gave Helen permission to go to the Library of Congress in Washington to go through Ella's collection of music, which she then used for these special symphony orchestra concerts.

Helen has produced a number of shows that have played in prestigious theatres such as the Palace Theatre and Ohio Theatre in Cleveland's Playhouse Square, Lakeside Chautauqua, Blossom Music Center and Millennium Park Chicago. Her latest and hugely successful production "Superstar: The Carpenters Reimagined" is a docu-musical that features fresh arrangements of many of the Carpenters timeless songs woven with fascinating backstage stories. The show sold out Playhouse Square twice and has successfully toured all around the United States. This is the show for which Richard Carpenter gave Helen his blessing to produce.

Recently Helen sang the National Anthem for NBC's Sunday night football, her talents were praised on American Idol and her album "Spellbound" was considered for a prestigious Grammy Award.

ABOUT THE MUSICIANS

JOE LEAMAN

(Musical Director and pianist) is an in-demand performer and educator throughout Ohio. A graduate of The University of Akron in percussion performance, Joe has managed to create an eclectic artistic life for himself as a pianist and percussionist, playing anything from contemporary classical music to jazz and Top 40. In addition to performing, Joe enjoys working for Woodsy's Music in Kent, Ohio and is the director of music at Montrose Zion United Methodist Church in Bath Township, Ohio.

ANTHONY TADDEO

(drums and percussion) is a drummer, composer and ODP performing artist currently residing in Cleveland, Ohio. Early on in his musical career, he studied with world-renowned percussionist Jamey Haddad before moving to New York City in 2009 to further pursue his musical career at The New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music. Anthony's versatility as a musician has also led him to record close to 20 albums with an array of musicians and genres from folk, blues, pop, americana, soul, electronic, fusion, rock and jazz. Notable past performances include sharing the stage with Dan Tepfer, Frank Wess, Ron McClure, Dave Edgar, Glenn Zeleski, Tia Brazda, Joel Schmirnoff, Charles Giordano (of the E-Street Band) and Amy Vachal. More notable performances include a jazz tour in Spain during the Ciclo 1906 Jazz Fest with Rachel Brotman, playing with Hey Mavis at NPR's *Mountain Stage* and performing at the Eastman House "Garden Vibes" series in Rochester, New York. Anthony currently teaches drums and percussion at Cuyahoga Community College in Cleveland.

BRYAN THOMAS

(Bass and vocals) is known in Northeast Ohio for his propulsive support as a bassist and enthusiastic conversational style. He is a veteran of The Glenn Miller Orchestra as well as a host of Cleveland jazz orchestras and is the principal bassist for Cleveland's Opera Circle. Bryan is a recording artist and arranger for salsa bands, the americana band Hey Mavis, jazz band Hot Djang, singer Helen Welch, American songbook concert series *The Song Is You*, and with wife and hammered dulcimer player, Tina Bergmann. Mr. Thomas has been instructing double bass at Kent State University since 1999.

CHARLIE TRENTA

(guitar and vocals) is a native of Akron, Ohio, and has been active in the Akron and Cleveland music scenes since 2001. He has recently recorded and performed as a member of the bands Herzog, Zach and the Bright Lights, and Winslow. Charlie earned a bachelor degree in Jazz Studies and Guitar Performance from The University of Akron. He also teaches guitar and bass guitar at the Aurora School of Music and the Fairlawn School of Music.

Song List (with instrumental soloists listed)

“There’s a Kind of Hush” – Joe Leaman on piano

“Ticket to Ride”

“Close to You”

“For All We Know”

“Superstar” – Charlie Trenta on guitar feature

“Rainy Days and Mondays” – Charlie Trenta on guitar feature

“Jambalaya”

“Solitaire” – Joe Leaman on piano

“Goodbye to Love” – Charlie Trenta on guitar solos

“Yesterday Once More”

“Hurting Each Other”

“Masquerade” – Joe Leaman on piano

“Sweet Sweet Smile” – Anthony Taddeo (drums) on Cajon

“I Won’t Last a Day Without You”

“Mr. Postman” – Bryan Thomas on bass

“We’ve Only Just Begun”

“Top of the World”

ENCORE: “You’re The One”