



*Celebration of Life
for
Roderick Ayers Smith*



Overture

Finale

December 5, 1953

April 26, 2010

Saturday, May 1, 2010

10:00 a.m.

Martin Luther King, Jr. International Chapel

830 Westview Drive, SW

Atlanta, GA 30314

Order of Celebration

Prelude

Processional

Call to Worship

Reverend Howard Creecy, Jr.

Invocation

Reverend Vandy C. Simmons

Scriptures

Bishop Robert Humphries

Old Testament Psalm 23: 1-6

New Testament John 14: 1-6

Solo

Shaun Anderson

Tribute

Childhood Friend:

Bobby Hendrix

College Mentor:

Dr. Ted McDaniel

Co-Worker/Friend:

Dallas Allen

Asst. Principal of Westlake High School:

Dr. Dorothy Arnold

Musical Tribute

Larry Jackson

Words of Comfort

Reverend Howard Creecy, Jr.

Solo

Virginia Reddington

Acknowledgements

Willie Watkins Funeral Home

Recessional



Maestro Roderick Ayers Smith



I Am Safely Home

*I am home in Heaven, dear ones;
oh, so happy and so bright!
There is perfect joy and beauty
in this everlasting light.
All the pain and grief is over,
Every restless tossing passed;
I am now in peace forever,
safely home in Heaven at last.
Did you wonder how I so calmly,
trod the valley of the shade?
Oh; but Jesus' love illumined,
every dark and fearful glade.
And He came Himself to meet me,
in that way so hard to tread;
And with Jesus' arm to lean on,
could I have one doubt or dread?
Then you must not grieve so sorely,
for I love you dearly still;
Try to look beyond earth's shadows,
pray to trust our Father's will.
There is work still waiting for you,
so you must not idly stand;
Do it now, while life remaineth,
you shall rest in Jesus' land.
When that work is all completed,
he will gently call you Home;
Oh, the rapture of that meeting,
oh, the joy to see you come!*



Maestro Roderick Ayers Smith



Magnum Opus

Musician, Protégé, Composer, Arranger, Educator, Director, Clinician and Virtuoso-- Roderick Ayers Smith was born to shape the dimensions and texture of music. The scope and depth of his musical contributions span most of his life. His brother Hank remembers him, as early as grade school, feeling the rhythmic beat of band legends from back in the day. Some say that his birthmark is a clef note. How could it be any different with "Ayers" in his birth name?

Rod Smith was born in Statesboro, Georgia on December 5, 1953. He was an active member of the youth choir at Brannen Chapel United Methodist Church. His gifted ear for music and his natural talent was evident before the age of eight. That same talent would take him from the band room at Statesboro High School, to Morehouse College, to the University of Iowa, to France, Spain and other jazz hotspots around the world.

His music scholastics were recognized by school band directors and his parents. He attended summer music camp at Georgia Southern University from the 10th through the 12th grade. He was also a member of the all-state high school band. After graduating with honors from high school, Rod attended a Music Performance Program at Berklee College of Music in Boston. Morehouse College became Rod Smith's home. The Morehouse music department, under the watchful tutelage of first Dr. Ted McDaniel and then local legend Joe Jennings, deepened his love for band music. Dr. McDaniel recalls this about his freshman class recruitee Rod Smith, "His saxophone playing during his collegiate days, especially on alto, was defined by his gorgeous sound, a sound with enough tonal presence, clarity, and sweetness

that soon placed him in the lead alto chair, as the saxophone section leader." Rod became the most featured soloist in the Morehouse Jazz Lab Band. Tommy Stewart, a master trumpeter and arranger, also a faculty member at Morehouse, met Rod Smith in the fall of 1971 while the jazz band played at a jazz festival on campus that featured Mandrill. He says of Rod, "I recognized that Rod was one of the best sight-readers in the country" and invited him to recording sessions which resulted in several notable recordings while he was still in college.

Rod Smith graduated from Morehouse College, Magna Cum Laude, with a Bachelor of Arts degree and then matriculated on a scholarship to the University of Iowa, upon the advice of Dr. McDaniel, now Professor of Music and Director of Jazz Studies at The Ohio State University. He returned to Atlanta after earning a Master of Arts in just one year! He then became an Associate Professor of Music at his beloved Morehouse, a position he held for 15 years. Thereafter, he was named Chairman of the Music Department and Director of Bands at Westlake High School within the Fulton County School System until his death.

Dr. Rod Smith, an honorary appellation justly bestowed in recognition of his musical genius, commanded the music world. His music power was awe-inspiring and often unduplicated. Not only was Rod a scholar and creative artist, he was a humble man whose affection for music resonates in music halls and studios around the city. Few know yet, the caliber of his cadence.

Many of Mr. Smith's students now perform professionally and attribute their success to his mentorship and directorship. Derek Scott, Sam Sims, William Green, Carl Boyd and Tony Cunningham are just a few of his protégés. Other former students have gotten band or music scholarships to attend Florida A&M University, Georgia Southern University,

Hampton University, University of Georgia, Tennessee State, Miles College and other prestigious institutes around the country.

In his biography, Rod Smith is recognized for his ambidextrous, precise, facile skill and a prima vista music sight-reading ability. Yet the accolades expand from there to record that he was an astounding master of the double stop play note, a composer ad libitum, who could make any woodwind howl whether it was a flute or a soprano, alto, or tenor saxophone.

Woodwind instruments obeyed Rod Smith; allowing him the liberal, jaw-dropping timbre rich performance of turnaround cadence and pentatonic melodies rarely reposed in one man. His professional experience includes performances with legends such as Donald Byrd, Freddie Hubbard, Freddie Cole, Donald Brown, Johnnie Taylor (Band Leader), Ojeda Penn, Larry Jackson, Nancy Wilson, Dee Dee Bridgewater, The Four Tops, The Temptations, Keith Jarrett, Barry White, Jean Carne, Al Green, The Savannah Symphony, The Afro-American Philharmonic of Atlanta (John Peek-Director), Lou Rawls, The Neighborhood Arts Ensemble under the Directorship of Mr. Joe Jennings, The Tommy Stewart Orchestra, and The Lekan Jazz Group.

Mr. Smith always kept a music group of his own that he directed. His brother, Dr. Hank Smith, fondly remembers that Rod was always getting little bands and groups together beginning in Statesboro. He played for the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta, he performed at numerous jazz festivals across the country and played both special and private events and conducted clinics at such esteemed venues as The Atlanta Jazz Festival,

City Stages Jazz Festival, Montreaux Jazz Festival and multiple high school and college festivals and music clinics.

Roderick Ayers Smith recorded songs with Solar Source (solo project), Kenyada, Pete Willis, Dallas Austin, George Clinton, The SOS Band, The Williams Brothers, Milton Brunson and his saxophone music was featured in the classic movie, *Fled*. He was also the musician on numerous commercials for local and national radio and television spots.

Music is "soul notes," Rod always said. Rod Smith bared his soul completely and entirely as a gustoso player who heard the beat, changed the beat, and created a new beat.

Listen, listen well in the quiet of the night. Hear the notes of his gladdened soul. Rod Smith is playing you a homophonic song in perfect pitch. Listen, world listen. A Master is still blowing his horn.

He is survived by his loving wife, Nannette D. Smith, daughters, Tiffaney (Torrey) Tomlinson and Heather Smith, both of College Park, Georgia, Melany (Shun) Reynolds of Atlanta, Georgia; three grandchildren, Torrey, Jr., known as "TJ", Taylor and Taniya, his only brother, Henry "Hank" (Cheryl) Smith, III, of Greensboro, North Carolina; nephew, Henry "Quad" (Keisha) Smith of Woodbridge, VA, niece, Dr. Erin Smith, Jacksonville, FL, nephew, Alan Smith of Atlanta, Georgia, and a host of aunts, uncles and cousins other relatives and friends.

Pall Bearers

Willie James "Monk" Jackson
Troy Lane
Jamison Chandler

Carl Boyd
Chuck Anderson
Demond Conner

Flower Attendants

Stephanie Sutton
Erica Sutton
Kelly Sutton

Brenda Ford
Evette Summers
Janice Hall

Interment

Westview Cemetary
1680 Westview Drive, SW
Atlanta, GA

Acknowledgement

The family of the late Roderick Smith sincerely thanks each of you for your expressions of love and care during this time. Your calls, cards, floral arrangements, food, visits and prayers are deeply appreciated. God bless each of you.

The Master Jam Memorial Tribute for Roderick Smith will take place at Cafe' Circa located at the intersection of Edgewood Avenue and Boulevard in Atlanta, GA
Sunday, May 2nd from 6:00 p.m. - until.