

UNCLE LYLE AND HIS MUSICAL ROOTS

by: Ed Lettner of The Music Studio



I recently had the pleasure of helping my uncle Lyle return to his musical roots and, by doing so, I realized what a significant part music has played in his life.

Lyle called me to say that he had decided to start playing the saxophone and clarinet again. He had played professionally throughout the 1940s, but eventually the demands of raising a family and working as a salesman and business owner meant that he had to put his instruments away for many years.

Lyle has an alto saxophone, but he needed a new clarinet and also wanted a soprano saxophone. So, off I went to Long & McQuade Musical Instruments with Lyle's shopping list and our shared excitement about his return to playing. After all, it's quite inspiring when an 87-year-old expresses more enthusiasm for doing something than many people half his age.

In addition to the instruments and accessories, I chose several music books for Lyle that come with play-along CDs featuring the music of the Glenn Miller and Benny Goodman bands among others. As Lyle said, "I always wanted to play with those bands."

Lyle is now re-discovering the musical roots that first took hold during his school days in Toronto and led to him joining the Royal Canadian Navy Band in 1942. It was in this band that Lyle became friends with a musician who later taught music to my sister and me in high school. This coincidence came to light at my sister's wedding when, some 35 years later, they met again.

After the Second World War, Lyle's musical journey took him to Cleveland's House in Muskoka where he played in the band during the summer of 1947. It was there that Lyle met his future wife Jean and began the next stage of his life.

My uncle Lyle's musical roots have grown to touch many people in his life, created opportunities and provided him with many fond memories. Today, Lyle is re-visiting those roots by playing the music that started it all.

Ed Lettner owns The Music Studio in Etobicoke, which has offered music instruction since 1990. He is an honours graduate of the Humber College Institute of Technology music program. Ed hopes that his musical roots will lead to a life as rewarding as his uncle Lyle's. For information about the programs at The Music Studio, please call 416-234-9268, email ed@themusicstudio.ca or visit www.themusicstudio.ca