

Jeff Around Town – May 14th, 2024

Otis: KVNO, Carol Rosenberger with the Piano Sonata No. 23 in F minor, Appassionata. The opening movement of that Sonata, Ludwig Van Beethoven. 8:45 on a Tuesday and you know what that means. Well, now you do. We're going around town with Jeff. Jeff, how are you?

Jeff: Good morning, Otis. So, did you get out to see the Aurora Borealis this last weekend?

Otis: I went out on the deck, and I looked up.

Jeff: And?

Otis: Well, I've got a maple tree, and a street light. No, I didn't go out of town to see it.

Jeff: Trees are beautiful.

Otis: Yeah, yeah, it was a nice night.

Jeff: Well, a few days before the Northern Lights made their debut in the Midwest, I was flying back from Atlanta. It was exactly a week ago.

Otis: Oh, really?

Jeff: And flying in Tuesday afternoon, I can see the Omaha skyline, Otis. I can actually see my apartment. It was pretty cool, actually. Just recently.

Otis: Wow. I like doing that from airplanes. I live there.

Jeff: I live there.

Otis: I used to live there.

Jeff: Yep.

Otis: Or I don't want to live there.

Jeff: I hear the landing gear go down.

Otis: Yeah.

Jeff: And you know, we're looking over the airport and I'm trying to figure out where the tornado damage was because a friend of mine had a private plane that was damaged. I'm trying to figure that out. Landing gears down. And then I realized, Otis, that we're not landing. We're over... You don't actually generally fly over Eppley Airfield. You come in for a landing to Eppley. And at the same moment, we had some turbulence and I saw this little dark cloud. So, I thought, oh, there must just be a little thing. So, you remember a week ago, there was like that last minute little windstorm. So, we circle off to the east. I think, oh, we're just going to circle around. But we keep going east and we keep going. And the pilot doesn't say anything. And I'm thinking, Okay, this is this is odd. Finally, he gets on the PA and he says, you know, ladies and gentlemen, we're diverted to Des Moines.

Otis: Any of you know what Des Moines looks like from the air?

Jeff: I love Des Moines. It's... it's great. But yeah, it's so we're like, what? So, we're now uh... we're... we're landing in Des Moines. And there's the lack of communication. There's no one knows what's happening. We're on the ground there. The... I won't mention the airline, but even the flight crew was really frustrated because no one knew. Do we get off the plane? Do we take our luggage? Do we wait around? So, we're finally out at the gate kind of hanging around, trying to figure out what to do. And, you know, we kept hearing that maybe there was going to be another flight down the road. But we're also being told to go to baggage claim. There might be a... there might be a bus. We're getting a hold of loved ones in Omaha because I had to do the show the next morning. I've got to... I've got to get back. There's no, you know, some of us...

Otis: Oh you had to be here.

Jeff: I had to be... I had to be here. So...

Otis: Rumors of buses.

Jeff: Yes. Rumors of buses were greatly over exaggerated. A few people straggled off to the bar, but that that terminal was... was shutting down. And so, everyone was getting really tired and agitated. And then one lady makes a joke and she... she makes kind of a field of dreams joke. And she says, "Is this heaven or Iowa?", not the greatest joke. And I come back with a worse joke. The cliché of clichés. I'm almost embarrassed to tell you. I said, "Well, we're not in Kansas anymore." Cliche. So, at that moment, though...

Otis: Is that when they turned on you?

Jeff: This is... this is what's funny. At the precise moment I said Kansas, someone shouted, there's a double rainbow. So we all run to the window. We see this incredible double rainbow. And... and somehow the mood shifted, Otis. And we got to chatting. Some of us were from Omaha. Others were visiting Omaha for the first time. And some were flying for the first time. And they were kind of freaked out because they didn't know what was going to happen.

Otis: Right.

Jeff: And there were some older folks that were having trouble hearing the announcements. So, we began helping each other out and sharing what info we had. And we were trying to reassure those who were stressed out that everything was going to be OK. We were singing Omaha's praises, talking about restaurants and the zoo. And it was an example of how we need that human connection and how most people do love to help each other, even when you're stuck in the Des Moines airport. And a few hours later, we were... we were back and landed in Omaha and coming into Omaha. That familiar skyline twinkled in the distance in a way that only Omaha's skyline can. So, over the weekend, social media filled up with photos of the Northern Lights, I got to thinking about how something beautiful like a double rainbow or a rare solar storm can unite us and also how a tornado can unite us and helping each other out afterwards. And what's more beautiful than that rainbow or those Northern Lights is the

connection we all desire to have human to human and help each other out. And Otis, that's another Jeff around town, literally around town.

Otis: All I can say is you're lucky they didn't divert you to Newark. (laughter)

Jeff: I've... I've spent some hours on the Newark tarmac. That's another... another story. A Jeff around New York.

Otis: Around town with Jeff. Yeah. Got stuck there once. And the lady said, first thing we got to do is get you out of Newark. (laughter)