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Thank you, Ozayr, and welcome thesis students. This evening is in your honour as you complete the Master of Architecture program. It has been a pleasure to follow your work develop over the past years and to see the wide range of stimulating, exciting, and — most importantly — relevant thesis work. We are joined by members of our faculty and school community and by several guest critics who have participated in the discussion of your projects over the past two days.

This annual event is now in its sixth year. The first four “Dinners in the Street” took place along the main street of our beloved architecture building. Last year’s abrupt quarantine in March caught us by surprise, but we nevertheless assembled together on a shared Zoom screen and dined on food provided by Ottawa catering company Epicuria. This year we are grateful to have Epicuria cook for us again. Additional elements in the evening’s program include a video produced by Joel Tremblay in a seminar this semester and dozens of slides generously provided by many of you, tracing your time together over the past several years. Some members of the faculty, several of our esteemed guests, and two of your own cohort, Michael Jaworski and Fiki Falola, will offer some words of reflection. And we will have music performed by jazz vocalist Ed Reed and pianist Adam Shulman.

Planning an online event like this is a challenge, and I’d like to thank the team that has made tonight’s program possible. Zachary and Charlie Moffitt Treanor, ages three and six, made the fabulous artwork for the invitation. Ellen Perrissoud organized the catering for those of you in Ottawa and those out of town. She and Gabrielle Argent planned and coordinated the hosting and logistics for the evening, and Steve MacLeod choreographed your slides to musical accompaniment. We’re very grateful to all of them and to those who have generously offered to share their thoughts with us during the evening.

Over the next hour and a half, we will alternate between song and spoken words, approximating the leisurely pace of a multi-course meal. It is my pleasure now to introduce Ed Reed and Adam Shulman.

**Ed** released his first CD in 2007 at the age of 78. In a music critics' poll in 2014, he was voted the #1 "Rising Star" Male Vocalist in the United States. His long life story, which began in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles, includes chapters of military service, addiction, incarceration, recovery, and redemption, becoming a counselor and a teacher. For me, Ed is a shining testament to the generosity of the human spirit and to the idea that life itself is a continual project of new beginnings. He has recorded four critically acclaimed albums and performed in many of the world's prominent jazz venues, including three sold-out nights at Lincoln Center in New York. Concurrent with his singing career, he has what he calls his "day job"—developing and delivering a health and education lecture series called *The Art and Practice of Living Well*. Over the past year, Ed has lost nearly all of his sight. He's singing some lyrics for us tonight from memory; for other songs, we will hear his remarkable voice as recorded on his albums.

**Adam Shulman** studied jazz piano at the University of California, Santa Cruz. He performs with San Francisco Bay Area musicians and vocalists and internationally renowned artists like Dayna Stephens, Miguel Zenon, and Paula West. Adam is also a composer and arranger and has released four albums of original music. He will complement the intro that you just heard with another piano solo at the end of the program.

This has been no ordinary year, and tonight is no ordinary celebration. Our emotions are necessarily mixed; there may be some sadness and perhaps some doubt about uncertain futures, but also much hope and shared joy. The songs we will hear embody a fair bit of nostalgia and speak of the paradoxes of endings that are also commencements, about moments that are at once both bitter and sweet. All are, in some way, love songs. I hope that you will embrace this metaphor and think of your time in the Azrieli School of Architecture & Urbanism as a unique kind of love affair, as I thought of my own time as a student long ago, and as I now reflect on my six years as Director.

These years have been *Unforgettable*, which is the title of the first song Ed will sing for us. He and Adam are joining us live from Ed's home in Richmond, California.

I also want to take a moment to recognize two valued colleagues, professors Yvan Cazabon and Roger Connah. For several of the past years, they have led the large thesis MArch studio. In many ways, they and their students have set a standard for how broad, interdisciplinary, experimental, and even visionary an architecture thesis can be. Though both are retiring from teaching at Carleton, they too stand at a threshold of new and exciting chapters, a commencement.

Ed Reed's final song, *Here's to Life*, is dedicated to Roger, Yvan, and the graduating students as you all move forward toward new horizons.

*Here's to Life* speaks not to the past but to our various exciting futures. I believe that our lives are defined by the risks we take. Please do not be afraid to be bold. To paraphrase from the lyrics, have no regrets, and please continue to chase your dreams. Be hungry still to see what's down another road beyond the hill. May all your storms be weathered, and all that's good get better. Here's to life, and (please raise a glass to our students) here's to all of you.