

Kim Darwin – Bio

Kim Darwin is a masterful accordionist as well as an accomplished pianist and composer. As a young boy Kim first learned to improvise on the accordion. Upon entering university at 16, he turned to piano and composition, earning a Bachelor of Music Degree in Composition from the University of British Columbia.

As a versatile freelance pianist and accordionist, Kim went on to enjoy a rich and varied musical career. He played in Big Band ensembles with bandleaders such as Bobby Hales and Dal Richards and played in show bands backing up Hollywood acts. Kim was also active in numerous Jazz ensembles including the Dave Quarin Quartet, the Roy Reynolds Quintet, the Ray Sikora Quintet and the Brad Muirhead Septet.

Kim regularly played piano in professional music theatre productions. He played with the Canadian touring show, *A Chorus Line* and with Gaslight Theatre and Arts Club Productions in Vancouver. An adept vocal accompanist, Kim worked for years as a pianist with the Variety department of the CBC. He performed with numerous well-known Jazz vocalists such as George La Fleche and Eleanor Collins.

In the '80s Kim was a founding member of the Durmen, where his uniquely humorous, virtuosic and engaging style of composing emerged. His European-style dances and waltzes were infused with Jazz harmonies and improvisations. Pieces bearing quirky titles such as *Apprentice Prepared*, *Blowfish* and *Middle-Class Dance*, are still performed today.

Kim also maintained a passion for modern and avant-garde Jazz. In the 90's, along with the fierce members of the Free F'all Quartet and the Paul Blaney Quartet, he continued to explore and push the boundaries of Jazz improvisation.

A very experienced music teacher, Kim has instructed hundreds of piano and accordion students. He has led adult education classes in piano at Capilano College, Vancouver, BC, held master classes and taught private lessons in piano and accordion. Kim taught for years in the Jazz program at Courtenay Youth Music Camp in BC. Kim's first priority was the wellbeing of his young students, although he did insist they call him by his title, *My Liege*. His students reciprocated by calling their band *Ask Kim!*

Kim has lately returned to his musical roots. He is now writing and recording music featuring the accordion in varied musical settings; as a solo instrument, and in duos and trios. Drawing from his broad range of musical interests, Kim incorporates elements of Jazz, Classical, Tango, and European dance music in his rich and lively compositions.

Recent musical collaborations include; recording and performing with the *Saul Berson Jazz Quartet*, an unusual combination of sax, accordion, guitar and acoustic bass and with *Jaiya*, a Celtic/fusion trio with vocals.

The Canada Council for the Arts has recognized Kim's talent as a composer and performer by awarding him a grant for specialized music sound recording. With the Canada Council's support Kim has produced an album of his original compositions featuring the accordion. His CD, *Accordion Nights* has just been released in 2004.