

BIOGRAPHY – WALTER MARTELLA

Walter Martella began studying piano and accordion at the young age of five. At age seven he was accepted into the Powell River Boys' choir at the Powell River Academy of Music under the tutelage of Don James. By age eleven he added study of the coronet to his flourishing musical experiences. Walter continued to pursue each of these interests throughout his junior and senior high school years, but his post-secondary studies focused primarily on his study of trumpet. He first attended Malaspina College in Nanaimo, BC, went on to study at the University of Victoria, and completed his studies at the Banff School of Fine Arts. By this time he had played and sung everything from classical to jazz, modern to contemporary. He discovered that there were no boundaries to what he could accomplish. Although Walter's primary focus had been the trumpet, he excelled at composition and theory.

Upon completion of his schooling, he returned to his hometown of Powell River and secured a position at the Academy of Music where his training first began. Walter's work at the Academy encompassed many forms of musical instruction; solo instruments (trumpet, piano, coronet, accordion), choir directing and conducting. Under the direction of Don James, Walter began conducting more frequently. He also had opportunity to study with Elmer Eisler which led to his conducting the well-known Elmer Eisler Singers in a short choral concert. He continued to hone his conducting skills with instruction from Dianne Loomer and Dr. Len Ratslaff. He also attended workshops offered by the BC Choral Federation.

At present, Walter conducts the Powell River Boys Choir, the Powell River Academy Singers, the Powell River Chorus (80 members) and the Powell River Community Band. In addition to these responsibilities, he teaches piano, trumpet and theory instruction at the Powell River Academy of Music.

Walter performs frequently in small recitals, large concerts (choir or band), with the Walter Martella Jazz Trio, solo on piano, trumpet or both and just as often is requested to accompany other musicians in various musical venues. He has frequently applied his extensive accompaniment skills during each International Choral Kathaumixw (meaning - a gathering together of different peoples) for rehearsals and performances conducted by Don James and Fred Sjöberg. He is also a very competent composer and arranger for all types of music and various instrumental combinations. He has used this talent regularly working with choreographer, Carol Coulson, and the Rainbow Theatre in Courtenay, B.C.

Walter has performed extensively with some very talented musicians. One of his concerts found him sharing and trading talents on trumpet and piano on stage with Allen Matheson and Brad Turner. Just prior to that concert, he joined Moira Ostensen in a classical/jazz oriented recital for two pianos. He has performed on piano or trumpet (or both) with Rene Worst, Ron Johnson, Don Stewart, Dee Daniels, Paul Steenwise, Kenny Wheeler, Campbell Ryga, Tom Keenlyside, Henry Young, Ross Taggart, the Beebop Cowboys and many others. He has appeared in many other live performances concerts, clubs and jazz festivals. He has opened for such performers as the New York Voices, The Real Group, Carol Wellsman, and Trooper.

Walter has been involved in several CD recordings as a performer, arranger and composer. The most recent CD, "It's Lush", with Anna Lyman, Rick Kilburn and Keith Copeland was completed just last year. Others include a Powell River Chamber Choir CD called "Live in Prague" and two jazz CDs involving his jazz trio and vocal jazz group "Soundtrax". Both included some of his own compositions. He is noted as accompanist and conductor on an Academy Singers compilation disk which includes performances from 1998, 2000 and 2002 during Kathaumixw.

Because of his performing versatility, Walter has had opportunity to travel all over the world. His chamber choir, in which he sings lead tenor, has traveled to Venezuela, Prague, Spain, Sweden and Mexico City. While he was a member of the Powell River Youth Choir he performed in France, Germany, Denmark and Holland. His Boys Choir has performed in Mexico, USA, Poland, Hungary, Austria, Germany and Western Canada.

Walter has also traveled to many areas of BC (Nelson, Whitehorse, Kelowna) with Peter Taylor's Soundtrax Vocal Jazz Group as an instrumental soloist and as a member of the Walter Martella Trio. He

has traveled back and forth along the Sunshine Coast many times in order to fulfill requests to perform with fellow musicians.