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Jazz pianist Chris Donnelly plays in Kamloops on Tuesday as part of his Western Canada tour. Kamloops This Week

## Pianist on key

By Dale Bass - Kamloops This Week

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Coffee and doughnuts are off Chris Donnelly's menu these days.

It's not a diet-related consideration — it's a reflection of the sleep woes he's encountering as he travels Canada's main highway west on his first tour outside his hometown of Toronto.

And, as he heads to the West Coast, the pianist and composer is also discovering the weather realities of the country.

“I just left Winnipeg and it was definitely cold, and now I'm in Edmonton, where it's minus two degrees. When I left Toronto, it was 25 [degrees Celsius].”

Donnelly is performing in Kamloops on Tuesday, a last-minute gig booked by Entertainment Management promoter Ray Nyuli.

Donnelly will come to Kamloops after shows in Vancouver jazz clubs.

When asked if he'd describe himself as a jazz pianist, Donnelly said providing an answer isn't easy.

“That's kind of a funny question,” he said. “It would depend on how you define jazz. Jazz is different things to different people.

“I describe myself as a pianist, composer and improviser.”

He's also been on the faculty of the Humber College Community Music School, a school he started attending when he was three, clapping, dancing, singing and starting on the journey that would eventually see him receive a master's of music in jazz performance from the University of Toronto.

He also received a graduation award for students who are seen as having the greatest potential to make a contribution to music.

“My mom was musical. She played the piano and she decided that music was very important to us,” Donnelly said. “But that doesn't mean I only did music. I played baseball, hockey, soccer. It's just there's something about music. It was like a magnet.”

He's just released his first recording, Solo, on the Alma Records label and is touring to support it.

Donnelly has discovered that life on the road, while exciting, also plays havoc with his sleep patterns.

“I had friends tell me don't drink too much coffee and don't eat too many doughnuts while you're out there. And they were right.”

Donnelly performs Tuesday at St. Paul's Cathedral, 360 Nicola St.,

at 7:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$12 and

available at the door.

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