

CHRIS DONNELLY | PIANIST

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Biography

“..this guy sure knows his way around the piano. And his virtuoso playing blows the mind... In a way, he resembles a young Duke Ellington...” (World Music Central.org)

Juno-nominated pianist and composer Chris Donnelly is one of the most captivating and versatile artists on today's music scene. Trained simultaneously as a classical pianist and a jazz pianist, his genre-bending repertoire is an eclectic mix of jazz, ragtime, stride, gospel, improvisation, original compositions and classical music.

In September 2008, Chris released his Juno-nominated, debut album with Alma Records called 'Solo,' featuring a blend of original material and arrangements of jazz standards. This also earned him nominations for 'Best Recording of the Year' and 'Best Keyboardist of the Year' from the 2009 National Jazz Awards.

In March 2011, Chris released an album of original music inspired by the works of graphic artist M.C. Escher. Entitled '*Metamorphosis*,' the 50-minute composition starts with a single theme; each movement draws inspiration from the previous one, changing subtly and seamlessly, until the music arrives at the initial theme again. The album also features a reproduction of Escher's work and an original poem by Toronto's Poet Laureate, Giorgio Di Cicco.

Chris is a Steinway artist, Associate Composer at the Canadian Music Centre, and an instructor at the University of Toronto. He tours internationally with his clarinet/piano ensemble **The Wolak - Donnelly Duo**, and is a member of the jazz trio **Myriad3**.

Myriad3

“Myriad3 is cutting edge, the future of modern jazz.” (Brent Black, Critical Jazz)

Myriad3 was an accident. Chris, Dan, and Ernesto had never played together until a few substitutions and a twist of fate put them on stage together for the first time in late 2010. Since then, the trio has performed all over the world including performances at Ronnie Scott's International Jazz Piano Trio Festival, the Tokyo Jazz Festival and Jazzahead! in Bremen, Germany.

The band is a true collective. Each member acts simultaneously as a leader and as a sideman. They play mostly original music that features different aspects of jazz improvisation, ensemble performance and contemporary composition. The band has released 4 albums on Alma Records/Universal: Tell (2012); The Where (2014); Tell((Chip)) (2015); and Moons (2016.) The Where was nominated for a Juno Award and a Sirius Radio XM Indie Music Award in 2015.

The Wolak - Donnelly Duo

Armed with a clarinet, a piano, and their personable stage presence, Kornel Wolak and Chris Donnelly present a remarkable blend of classical and jazz music rarely heard in live performance. From revered classical pieces such as Mozart's *Clarinet Concerto in A Major*, to Gershwin's famous *Rhapsody in Blue*, and Oscar Peterson's classic *Hymn to Freedom*, Chris and Kornel captivate audiences with virtuosity, familiar melodies, and a profound passion for music and performing.

In April 2013, the Wolak/Donnelly Duo released their debut album "*Common Ground*" with Alma Records. Their recent collaboration with Prairie Debut generated a 15-performance tour of the Canadian Prairies between February and April 2013. Since their first performances in September 2011, Chris and Kornel have toured Canada extensively from the East Coast with Debut Atlantic, the West Coast with Music by the Sea in Bamfield BC, and many major festivals and concert series in Ontario. They are also dedicated to working with schools and communities, offering educational performances and workshops.

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WORK EXPERIENCE

University of Toronto

- Faculty Member at the Faculty of Music (2008-present)

National Music Camp of Canada

- Faculty Member (Summer 2004-present)

PrairieLands Jazz Camp

- Faculty Member (Summer 2006)

Humber College Community Music School

- Faculty Member (2005-2006)

SPECIAL PERFORMANCES

Myriad3 European Tour (October 2018)

Myriad3 European Tour (April 2018)

Myriad3 Canadian Jazz Festival Tour (2017)

Myriad3 European Tour (2017)

Myriad3 Tokyo Jazz Festival (2016)

Myriad3 European Tour (2016)

Allied Concert Tour, USA (2016)

CIMA's Mission to Japan – Canadian Embassy (2015)

Myriad3 European Tour (2015)

Myriad3 Ronnie Scott's International Jazz Piano Trio Festival, London UK (2015)

Myriad3 JazzAhead! Bremen, Germany (2015)

Northern BC Tour (2015)

Shanghai International Arts Festival - with Ron Korb (2014)

Myriad3 USA Tour (2014)

Myriad3 Canadian Jazz Festival Tour (2014)

Myriad3 European Tour (2013)

Prairie Debut Tour (2013)

Debut Atlantic Tour (2011)

Stratford Summer Music Festival (2011)

Music by the Sea (2010-2013)

Elora Festival (2010)

Montreal Chamber Music Festival (2010)

National Jazz Awards (2009)

JunoFest (2009)

Montreux Jazz Piano Competition (2009)

Nottingham National Jazz Piano Competition (2008, 2010)

The Great American Jazz Piano Competition, Jacksonville Jazz Festival (2007)

MUSIC EDUCATION

University of Toronto (2005 - 2007)

- Graduated with Masters in Jazz Performance (2007)
- Studied privately with David Braid

University of Toronto (2001-2005)

- Graduated with Bachelor in Jazz Performance with Honours (2005)
- Studied with Paul Read, Gary Williamson, Brian Dickinson, Kirk MacDonald and Terry Promane
- Studied minimalism and rhythmic theory with Russell Hartenburger
- Studied harmony, counterpoint and composition with Alexander Rapoport

Royal Conservatory of Music (1990 - 1998)

- Played in many Kiwanis Festivals and other local recitals and competitions
- Completed Grade 3 Harmony with first class honours (1996)
- Completed Grade 9 Piano with first class honours (1998)
- Studied with James Anagnoson, Lynda Metelsky and Earl Mlotek

Humber College Community Music School (1986 - 2001)

- Began music studies at age two and a half, in the early childhood programs of Orff and Kodaly
- Started piano lessons at the age of four
- Studied composition, arranging, theory and applied lessons; played in combos and big bands
- Studied with Cathy Mitro, Anthony Panacci, Nancy Walker, Jim Lewis, Pat Wheeler

AWARDS, SCHOLARSHIPS and GRANTS

Steinway Artist (2015-present)

Canadian Music Centre

- Associate Composer (2013 – Present)

Juno Nominations

- *Solo* - Traditional Jazz Album of the Year (2009)
- *The Where* - Jazz Album of the Year, Group (2015)

2009 National Jazz Awards Nominations

- Best Keyboardist of the Year
- Best Recording of the Year (*Solo*)

Canada Council for the Arts

- Touring Grants (2011-2017)
- Audience and Market Development Travel Grant (2015)
- Project Grants to Professional Musicians (2010)
- Project Grants to Professional Musicians (2008)

Ontario Arts Council

- Touring Grant (2013, 2016-17)
- Popular Music Recording Grant (2012)

Toronto Arts Council

- Music Creation and Audio Recording (2014)

Nottingham National Jazz Piano Competition

- Finalist (2008, 2010, 2012)

The Great American Jazz Piano Competition

- 2nd Place (2007)

IAJE Canada

- The Dr. Oscar Peterson/Verve Canada Scholarship Winner (2006-07)

University of Toronto

- The Tecumseh Sherman Rogers Graduating Award (2007)
- Nicolas Fodor Fellowship (2006)
- OGS (Ontario Graduate Scholarship) (2006)
- Jean Chalmers Scholarship (2002), (2004)
- Don Wright Scholarship (2004)
- Pandit Jasraj Endowment Award (2004)

CERTIFICATIONS

Audiokinetic

- Wwise Certification 101 (March 2017)
- Wwise Certification 201 (April 2017)

DISCOGRAPHY

- Gruber "*Pico-8 Tunes Vol. 2*" (2019)
- Gruber "*Trap Labs OST*" (2018)
- Gruber "*Pico Mix*" (2018)
- Myriad3 "*Vera*" (Alma Records, 2018)
- Gruber "*Counterpoint*" (2017)
- Gruber "*Metamorphosis II*" (2017)
- Gruber "*Pico-8 Tunes Vol. 1*" (2017)
- Gruber "*Stranger Things Soundtrack Vol. 1, Chiptune Edition*" (2017)
- Gruber "*Wonder Boy III, MilkyTracker Edition*" (2016)
- Gruber "*The Last Bot*" (2016)
- Gruber "*Sonic the Hedgehog, Pico-8 Edition*" (2016)
- Gruber "*Double Dragon, Pico-8 Edition*" (2016)
- Myriad3 "*Moons*" (Alma Records, 2016)
- Gruber "*The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past, Pico-8 Edition*" (2015)
- Chris Donnelly // Myriad3 "*Tell Chip*" (Alma Records 2015)
- Myriad3 "*The Where*" (Alma Records 2014)
- Wolak-Donnelly Duo "*Common Ground*" (Alma Records 2013)
- Myriad3 "*Tell*" (Alma Records 2012)
- Chris Donnelly "*Metamorphosis*" (Alma Records 2011)
- Chris Donnelly "*Solo*" (Alma Records 2008)