

## Biography

# John Arpin

"Giant of the Keyboard"

Pianist John Arpin has long been regarded as one of the most versatile performers on the Canadian music scene. This talented artist composes, arranges, conducts, records and maintains a full concert schedule. He is as comfortable playing solo piano as he is performing in concert with full symphony orchestra and tours extensively throughout Canada, the United States, Europe and the Orient. John Arpin has been nominated for Juno Awards in Canada on three separate occasions and in October of 2000 celebrated a milestone with the release of his 60th career album. Though he plays everything from turn-of-the-century classics to jazz to Broadway show tunes, John Arpin's name has become synonymous with piano rags and he is respected as one of the top Ragtime musicians in the world today.

In June of 1998 Mr. Arpin received the Scott Joplin Award (The Scott Joplin Foundation, Sedalia, Missouri) in recognition of his extraordinary contributions to the field of Ragtime. The late Ragtime great Eubie Blake pronounced John Arpin "the Chopin of Ragtime", while *The New York Times* labeled him "the Richter of Ragtime".

Mr. Arpin's concerts feature American popular music from the 1890s to the present, as he delivers a combination of classics, ragtime, stride piano, be-bop, traditional jazz, film and stage songs. His performances are sprinkled with wonderful historical anecdotes about the music and its creators, and his affable manner and delivery continues to endear him to audiences around the world.

His diversity is reflected in his many recordings - from piano and orchestra recordings of "The Music of Andrew Lloyd Webber" to piano solo albums featuring ragtime, baroque treatments of Broadway hits, honky-tonk and Spirituals, three albums with Maureen Forrester, and an instrumental album devoted to the music of Canadian singer/composer Gordon Lightfoot. *High Fidelity* magazine remarked of one of his albums, "This is the best recorded collection of piano rags that I know of and is, I suspect, the most authentically performed." Other albums include "Arpin at the Opera", "The Complete Piano Works of Scott Joplin" (a four disc set), "Ragtime on Broadway" and "The Greatest Hits of Al Jolson". More recently John has released a collection of solo piano tangos called "Blue Gardenia", another fine solo album of standards called "The Things I Love" and a series of seven CDs of popular nostalgic melodies, bringing his career album total to an unsurpassed sixty-seven.

Notable among his own compositions are "Jogging Along" (a theme song for the acclaimed CBC radio program "Morningside") and "Lyric Suite for Piano, Strings and Percussion" (for which he was awarded first prize out of 450 entrants in the Yamaha Second International Original Concert in Tokyo.) Concurrent with his own concert career, John also served as music director and accompanist to the great Canadian contralto, Maureen Forrester and to the acclaimed actor and chanteuse Louise Pitre, who is currently appearing on Broadway in the musical "Mamma Mia". He plays, writes and directs the music for the TVOntario children's

shows "Polka Dot Door" and "Polka Dot Shorts". He is often called upon to share the stage with peers such as vibraphonist Peter Appleyard and clarinetist Henry Cuesta. At ease in any musical milieu, John takes his passion for clarity and excellence to every performance.

Born in Port McNicoll, Ontario, Mr. Arpin graduated from the Royal Conservatory of Music at the age of sixteen. After studying at the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto, John became active in the Toronto music scene playing night clubs with his trio and as a soloist. He could also be found on the concert stage accompanying an opera singer, or performing turn-of-the-century music by Canadian composers on radio. His attention soon turned to playing, composing and arranging for television, the recording studio and the concert stage.

John is a respected mentor to developing musicians, an organizer of 'music series' and is generous with his time and talent in support of charitable causes. His masterful performances and delightful rapport with his audiences have established John Arpin as a world-class entertainer.