

MURL ALLEN SANDERS (SEATTLE, WASHINGTON) is an independent, modern accordionist, pianist, composer, teacher and recording artist who plays pop, rock, zydeco, country, jazz, blues and various ethnic styles on piano and accordion. He has worked with such diverse national and international artists as: Chuck Berry, Etta James, Merrilee Rush, Theodore Bikel, Peter Duchin, Leslie Gore, The Von Trapp Children, Lee Oskar, OhNo, Underground Resistance, Leroy Bell, Clare Fischer, Todd Simon, and composer David Matthews.

Murl has also worked with a host of regional luminaries including Terry Lauber, Ken Boynton, Danny Deardorff, Kelly Harland, Susan Pascal, Barbara Lamb, Geoffrey Castle, Orchestra Seattle, The Seattle Chamber Singers, The Everett Symphony, Nancy K. Dillon, Leon Lishner, Magical Strings, Tim Noah, Papaya, Michael Powers, Ellen Lippman Finn, Renee Redeker, Nadine Shanti, Tickle Tune Typhoon, Michael Tomlinson and Jim Valley, Billy Mac, Warren Rand, Chuck Deardorf, Wendy Marcus and Shawn Weaver among many others.

Recent notable performances include:

2005 Everett Symphony

2005 Katrina Benefit "Hell and High Water," Seattle

2005 Red Bull Academy Orchestra at McCaw Hall, Seattle

2005 Accordions International Festival, Caister, England

2005 Texas Accordion Convention

2005 Arizona Accordion Club

2005 The Petosa Accordion Extravaganza, Seattle

2006 Salt Lake City Area Accordion Club

2006 Leavenworth International Accordion Celebration

2006 ATG (Accordionists and Teachers Guild) Festival Minneapolis

2006 Kimberley International Old Time Accordion Championship in Kimberley, British Columbia

Murl's versatility has led him to be in demand as a concert artist, workshop presenter and freelance artist in numerous bands and studio work for MUZAK, television and radio commercials as well as sideman work on many CD projects in the Pacific Northwest and elsewhere. He also leads his own band, does solo work, composes and arranges music, sings, plays piano, harmonica, Hammond B-3 organ, electronic keyboards and teaches privately.

Murl's "Accordion Concerto No. 2" for accordion and orchestra was supported by a grant from the City of Seattle's Mayor's Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs. It was premiered on March 18, 2007 with Orchestra Seattle conducted by George Shangrow.

Murl's "Accordion Concerto No. 1" had a world premiere June 6, 2003 with Orchestra Seattle conducted by Maestro George Shangrow at Meany Hall on the University of Washington campus. It has since been performed by the Clear Lake Symphony in Texas conducted by Dr. Charles Johnson with accordionist Dr. Joe Pouzar.

"Murl Allen Sanders' trio dazzled the audience with his unique accordion style and energy...a mix of zydeco, blues and jazz..."
—Doris Osgood, Northwest Accordion News

"This is music that will make you unwind and smile."
—Melinda Bargreen, The Seattle Times

Murl is the pianist on the latest recording of music by Ellen Lippman Finn called "Matzoh Balls and Chitlins", jazz and blues with a Jewish twist.

YOU WILL DEFINITELY WANT TO ADD MURL'S RECORDINGS TO YOUR MUSICAL LIBRARY.

You can currently hear Murl's music in retail stores on the MUZAK network and in Nordstrom's own background music system. Recently Murl has played piano, accordion, organ and harmonica on soundtracks for the films:

"Georgia Rule"

"Sisterhood of the Travelling Pants"

"Eulogy"

"Moonglow"

"It's Only Temporary"

Read on for more biography and history:

In 2003 and 2004 Murl was a featured artist at the Leavenworth Accordion Festival and also in 2003 at the Chemainus B.C. Accordion Festival. In September 2002, Murl's group played for the opening night gala for Seattle Symphony at Benaroya Hall. Murl was a featured artist at the First and Second Annual Las Vegas International Accordion Convention in 2000 and 2001 performing and teaching workshops. Murl appeared at the Arizona Accordion Club in March 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005.

The Chicago Accordion Club and Milwaukee Accordion Club featured Murl in 2003. In 2004 Murl played a tour of California Accordion Clubs including San Diego, San Francisco, Escalon and Vacaville. Murl is a member of the Northwest Accordion Society and performs regularly at Seattle's Day of the Accordion and has been featured at the Forest Grove Accordion Club as well. Murl was also a featured artist at the Third Annual Cotati Festival in 1993.

Murl's introduction to jazz piano and the "American Songbook" was through his friend and teacher, John Wittwer. John was a superb pianist in the traditional jazz and ragtime styles and an intellectual who inspired his students with great literature and humor. Murl was recruited in high school to play jazz piano in the Nathan Hale big band and Seattle Community College big band by John Moawad, another high-energy motivational teacher.

Two other influential people need to be mentioned: Joe Petosa and his whole family for being so supportive of Murl's accordion endeavors and W.D. "Blackie" Blackstone for encouraging Murl early on to be serious about pursuing music.

Murl's earliest accordion influence was Stan Boreson, a local children's television personality, accordionist and comedian still working in Seattle. Stan inspired hundreds of kids to play the accordion. The Lawrence Welk show on TV also imprinted accordion music in Murl's brain and Myron Floren was Murl's hero when he was age six.

Aside from his first basics instructor, Leo Furman, Murl had only one truly influential accordion teacher as a child, Doug Middendorf in Seattle. However, Murl's musical education has included many wonderful and inspirational teachers: John Wittwer, Jerome Gray, George Peckham, Dave Peck, Terry Moore, Kenneth Benshoof, Robert and Gerald Kechley and Barbara Lundquist most notably.

Murl has a B.A. in music education from the University of Washington and teaches private lessons in accordion, piano and voice for individual adults and children. Murl has also taught choral music at Chinook Middle School in Bellevue, Washington.

His important accordion influences include Brazilian accordionist Sivuca, jazz accordionists Art Van Damme, Frank Marocco, Leon Sash and Tommy Gumina, Astor Piazzola, the Argentine bandoneonist, Richard Galliano, Ken Olendorf, zydeco/cajun players Clifton Chenier, Geno Delafosse, CJ Chenier and Bruce Daigrepoint, celtic and European players Maria Kaliniemi, Joe Derrane, Ivo Papasov's band, Phil Cunningham, various Brazilian and African accordionists, Los Lobos, Flaco Jiminez and various Klezmer players. Some of Murl's other musical influences are pianists Keith Jarrett, Bill Evans and Oscar Peterson, organists Billy Preston, Jimmy Smith, Jimmy McGriff, Richard "Groove" Holmes and Jack McDuff, saxophonists John Coltrane, Charlie Parker, Stan Getz and many others, guitarists B.B. King, Freddy King, Eric Clapton and others. The list could go on and on. All have played a role in expanding his accordion consciousness and style. Murl considers his friend and colleague, Frank Marocco, to be the best jazz accordionist alive and has been a big influence on him in recent years. Murl definitely has eclectic tastes and it has allowed him to play in many different situations.

Murl has been an active member of the Pacific Northwest music scene for over thirty years playing concerts, festivals, recording sessions, nightclubs, churches, synagogues and private clubs.

Pupils play an important role in Murl's life providing inspiration, energy and motivation to continue to improve both musically and personally. Teaching is a two-way street enriching the life of both teacher and student.

For more information, contact:

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