

Biography

Kelly DeWayne Richards is from Decatur, Indiana and started playing piano when he was five years old. He loved playing the piano and singing for hours everyday. He studied with piano instructor Judy Hakes Martin until 1979. During this time, he won several awards and spent five years touring with *The Men's Four Gospel Quartet*. In 1980, he enrolled in Indiana University School of Music and spent the next five years pursuing a degree in music education. It was during this time that he also discovered his love of Broadway music.

In 1985, Kelly moved to Florida and started playing piano at different venues in the Orlando area. He continued his education as a voice major/piano minor at The University Of Central Florida under direction of Dr. JoAnne Stephenson. He graduated in the spring of 1998 with a 4.0. After completing his degree, he auditioned for Walt Disney World and was hired on the spot as a pianist/vocalist for the company. He continues to teach and perform at the various venues throughout central Florida, Walt Disney World locations and Performing Arts Workshop venues.

Over the past years, Kelly has performed for many of Central Florida's television and theatrical productions. He has played for the casts of *Super boy*, *Crazy For You*, *Evita*, *Five Guys Named Moe*, *Altar Boyz* and others. He has also had the privilege to play for such celebrities as Paula Zahn, Steve Guttenburg, John Travolta, Billy Joel, Christie Brinkley, Ann Miller and many more.

Kelly has compiled two CD's. The first, "Affectionately Yours", is a collection of piano solos from the Broadway musicals "Cats", "Evita", and the movie soundtrack from "Ice Castles". The second CD, "The Phantom of the Palace", is a collection of piano solos and vocals, with songs from Broadway musicals and an original composition.

No one has said it better than music enthusiast, Robert Parr: *"I am constantly amazed at his ability to play such a wide variety of music. The technique is there - clear, precise, and right on target. What makes Kelly exceptional is the emotion he superimposes in his technique. He and the piano become one. The experience is one of the watching as well as listening. He can tear you up with one song and put you back together with the next one, but something wonderful has happened in between. You are never quite the same person. You are a little better because of the experience. Simply put, Kelly is...something special."*