

# Grant L. Simpson, CV

Vaudevillian Performer, Director, Vaudeville Historian, Consultant,  
Record Producer, Performing Artist,  
Composer/arranger, band leader, Musical Director

## Education

After years of classical studies on piano and guitar, Simpson attended formal jazz studies, Malispina College, 1979-1980. Thereafter, in the time honoured tradition, he has studied and mentored with leading Canadian and international jazz artists and learned by playing with other musicians/vocalists at home and abroad.

His first formal lessons:

Age 10 Group Piano Lessons with Mary Skipsy (Nanaimo) from 1969

Age 11 - 17 piano with Christina Burnett (Nanaimo)

Age 15 - 18 classical guitar with Phil Southern

Jazz Studies Program:

1979/80 Full-time studies in performance

Classical Theory/Harmony: Pat Carpenter

Jazz Studies Theory, History, Combo: Steve Jones

Classical Piano: Jackie Droz

Jazz Piano: Elmer Gill (1979)

Jazz Piano: Louise Rose (1980/81)

Jazz Piano: Jerry Bryant (1982)

Jazz Piano: Mike Taylor (1983)

Simpson has also studied and mentored with a number of leading artists including, but not limited to:

Steve Jones, Head of Jazz Department, University of Vancouver Island

Dick Wellstood, piano

Dave McKenna, piano

Ralph Sutton, piano

## Teaching

Simpson is recognized and renowned as a natural teacher of the art and technique of jazz and improvised music in northern Canada. He has taught privately and on commission with colleges and jazz societies in British Columbia and Yukon.

1980-1981 Dave's Keyboards in Victoria B.C.

1981-1984 Simpson's Piano Instruction (Owner, Operator, Teacher)

1990 - 2002 Private Teaching Whitehorse Yukon

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1996	Weekend Seminar on Teaching Jazz Piano for Yukon Music Teachers Association
2004	Introduction to jazz theory for Jazz Yukon
2005	Master Class on Stride Piano at Vancouver Community College
2007	Master Class on Stride Piano for Kamloops Jazz Society
2010	Jazz Yukon Improvisation Workshop Series for Jazz Yukon
2011	Jazz Yukon Vocal Jazz Intensive with Karin Plato
2013	Jazz Yukon Improvisation/Harmony/Charting Series for Jazz Yukon.
2013	Jazz Yukon Vocal Jazz Intensive with Karin Plato
2015	Jazz Yukon Vocal Jazz Intensive with Karin Plato and Steve Maddock
2016	Jazz and Musicianship Development Intensive: applied jazz vocabulary, theory and harmony
2016-17	Café des Voix vocal jazz repertoire development workshops

Among Simpson's students who have become nationally and internationally recognized professional musicians are Ingrid Jenson, Christine Jenson, Anita Bonkowski, Jesse Peters, Graeme Peters, Jody Peters, and Caroline Drury.

### **Selected performance highlights**

Simpson has performed for audiences in Korea, Mexico, Caribbean, China, United States and Canada over the past many years. He's been a featured artist on various occasions at the Vancouver International Jazz Festival, Vancouver Island Hot Jazz Festival, Yardbird Jazz Festival, both of Jazz Yukon's Jazz on the Wing and Jazz in the Hall series and Toronto's Winter Garden Theatre.

Although best known for his piano chops, and the groove he creates with his left hand bass lines, Simpson is a multi-instrumentalist recognized for his work on guitar, banjo and musical saw.

He has shared the stage with many of Canada's jazz icons over the years, and continues to perform in concerts, clubs and festivals throughout Canada and around the world.

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For over 20 years, Simpson Directed, Composed and Arranged the Frantic Follies Vaudeville Revue in Whitehorse, Yukon. As Producer and Artistic Director he has recruited, trained and coached literally hundreds of dancers, musicians, vocalists, performers and ensembles.

Feb 2020	Dawson City Music Workshops for JazzYukon. (Creator/Presenter/Teacher)
Nov 2019	The Prairie Vaudeville Revue (Winnipeg Crankie Festival) Producer, Director, Creative.
Oct 2019	Consultant for "Belle Darling Klondike Queen" Theatrical Production in Toronto about Klondike Kate. (Toronto)
Sept 2019	Producer/Musical Director of "Broccoli Farm", Claire Ness Kids Album (Release Date May 1/2020)
June 2019	Open Doors Winnipeg - (Host at Walker Vaudeville Theatre)
May 2019 - Present	The Prairie Vaudeville Radio Show on CJNU Fm (Producer and Host) Weekly
March 2019	Historical Presentation on Winnipeg Vaudeville for Winnipeg Centennial Library
Nov 2018	Home Routes Community Workshop Development
July 2018	Whitehorse Educational Theatre Project (12 Sessions)
July 2018	Atlin Music Festival
June 2018	Whitehorse Street Piano Festival (Artistic Director)
June 2018	Klondike Follies Cabaret Season (20 Shows)
March 2018	Frostbite Music Festival - Yukon
October 2017	Two Piano Tornado Tour of Ontario (14 Shows)
Sept 2017	Claire Ness Tour of Alberta
July 2017	Grant Simpson Vaudeville Revue
July 2017	Atlin Music Festival
June 2017	Ragtime Revue ((12 Shows)
April 2017	Twin Fiddles/Twin Pianos with Gordon Stobe - Nanaimo
January 2017	Claire Ness CD Release - Yukon
October 2016	Two Piano Tornado Tour M.B. & B.C. (22 shows)
June 2016	Dogtown the Musical (Composer, Lyricist, Arranger)
December 2015	Furlesque, Full Revue, Yukon
November 2015	Claire Ness Tour, Saskatchewan
October 2015	Basement Jazz Club, Saskatoon
Sept 2015	Tour with Claire Ness (3 Shows) Victoria, B.C.
Sept 2015	Tour with Karin Plato (8 Shows) Quesnell, Ashcroft, B.C.
April 2015	Malcolm Island Concert Series
April 2015	Haida Gwaii tour of Island (7 Shows)

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March 2015	Two Piano Tornado Tour of Manitoba (12 Shows)
Jan/Feb 2015	Swing Dance Yukon Tour of Communities (8 shows)
November 2014	VIA Rail Artist On Board Across Canada
October 2014	Two Piano Tornado Tour of B.C. and Alberta (14 Shows)
Aug 2014	Frog Mountain Music Festival, Yukon
July 2014	Atlin Music Festival, Atlin, B.C.
June 2014	Alianait Music Festival - Iqaluit, NU
October 2013	Nanjing Jazz and World Music Festival - Nanjing, China
March 2012	Jazz in the Hall, Whitehorse
October 2012	Home Routes House Concert Tour, Vancouver Island
October 2012	VIA Rail Musicians, Toronto - Vancouver
October 2012	Free Times Café, Toronto, Ontario
September 2012	EcDev Conference, Iqaluit, Nunavut
May 2012	Cole Porter Tribute Show, Whitehorse
November 10 - 24, 2011	Home Routes Concert Tour, Manitoba
October 12 - 23, 2010	Nanjing Jazz Festival, Nanjing, China
March 16-17 2010	River Rock Casino, Richmond BC
Feb 25-28 2010	Rendezvous Yukon with Gillian Campbell, Whitehorse,
January 22, 2010	House Concert with Don Ogilvie, Whitehorse
December 4, 2009	PianoRama – 4 Piano Extravaganza , Whitehorse
December 1-2, 2009	Old Crow Community Hall, Old Crow
November 3, 2009	Olympic Opening Ceremony Whitehorse,
October 9, 10, 11th, 2009	Vancouver Dixieland Jazz Festival, Cancouver, BC
October 07, 2009	Union Bay Community Hall, Union Bay, BC
October 1st, 2009	Artspace, Prince George, BC
November 8th-13th, 2008	Hello-Allo Street Festival, Shanghai, China
November 14 - 18th, 2008	Nanjing Jazz and World Music Festival, Nanjing, China
September 20th	Artspace, Prince George, BC
September 19th	Lakes District Arts Council Burns Lake, BC
April 14, 2008	Merritt Arts Council, Merritt, BC
April 13, 2008	Hermann's Jazz Club, Victoria, BC
April 12, 2008	Port Hardy Civic Centre, Port Hardy, BC
March 15, 2008	Chilliwack Arts Centre, Chilliwack, BC
March 13, 2008	Mary Winspear Centre, Sidney, BC
February 29, 2008	Estevan Arts Council, Estevan, SK
February 28, 2008	Moosomin & District Arts Council, Moosomin, SK
February 26, 2008	Station Arts Centre, Rosthern, SK
February 25, 2008	Melfort Arts Council, Melfort, SK
February 24, 2008	Tisdale Arts Council, Tisdale, SK
February 23, 2008	Kindersley & District Arts Council, Kindersley, SK
February 22, 2008	Leader & District Arts Council, Leader, SK
February 21, 2008	Shaunavon Arts Council, Shaunavon, SK

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February 20, 2008	Assiniboia Arts Council, Assiniboia, SK
February 19, 2008	Weyburn Concert Series, Weyburn, SK
Nov. 4th, 2007	Concert Series, Dawson Creek, BC
Nov. 7th, 2007	Concert Series, Lloydminster, AB
Sept 21st, 2007	Concert Series, Red Bluff, CA
Sept 18, 2007	Concert Series, Nakusp, BC
July 22nd, 2007	The Bay Club, Port Ludlow, WA
July 21st, 2007	Hermann's Jazz Club, Victoria, BC
July 20th, 2007	Butchard Gardens, Victoria, BC
June 1-3, 2007	North Island Hot Jazz Festival, Courtenay, BC
February 9, 2007	Prince George Civic Centre, George, BC
January 28, 2007	White Rock Jazz Society, White Rock, BC
January 27, 2007	Hermann's Jazz Club, Victoria, BC
January 25, 2007	Artspace, Prince George, BC
January 24, 2007	Roadhouse Theatre, McBride, BC
January 23, 2007	Chuck Mobley Theatre, Quesnel, BC
January 22, 2007	St. Andrews on the Square, Kamloops, BC
January 21, 2007	Creekside Theatre, Winfield, BC
January 20, 2007	Gateway Theatre, Richmond, BC
November 18, 2006	Duo with Caroline Drury, Lake Louise, BC
November 17, 2006	Concert Series, Invermere, AB
November 15, 2006	Concert Series, Brooks, AB
September 24, 2006	Yukon Arts Centre – CD Release, Whitehorse, YT
September 3, 2006	Hermann's Jazz Club, Victoria, BC
September 2, 2006	Saturna Island Jazz Society, Saturna Island, BC
September 1, 2006	Saltspring Island Jazz Society, Saltspring Island, BC
August 31, 2006	The Cellar Jazz Club, Vancouver, BC
July 2, 2006	Butchart Gardens, Victoria, BC
July 1, 2006	North Shore Jazz Festival, N. Vancouver, BC
June 30, 2006	Vancouver International Jazz Festival, Vancouver, BC
June 28, 2006	Ashcroft Opera House, Ashcroft, BC
June 2-4, 2006	North Island Hot Jazz Festival, Courtenay, BC
January 22, 2006	Jazz on the Wing, Whitehorse, YT
January 19, 2006	The Cellar Jazz Club, Vancouver, BC
January 17, 2006	Vancouver Community College, Vancouver, BC
January 13, 2006	Lake District Concert Society, Winfield, BC
January 11, 2006	Creston Concert Society, Creston, BC
January 10, 2006	Golden Concert Society, Golden, BC
November, 2004	Featured performer on the Inaugural Cruise of the Holland America ship M.S. Oosterdam (Florida Keys, Bermuda and Bahamas)

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And the list goes on and on. During 2013-2017, Simpson completed a series of cross-Canada tours and teaching gigs, including several Home Routes/Chemin Chez Nous circuits, concerts, festivals and one-person vaudeville mini-shows.

### Composing and arranging

Simpson has developed an extensive catalogue of compositions of new jazz and other works for groups of differing instrumentation and artistic missions.

- 1973 First compositions registered to SOCAN (the BMI)
- 1978 Wrote full musical score for "Coming Apart at the Seams (a history of the Social Credit Government)". Toured throughout B.C.
- 1981 Composed Film Score for Yukon Health and Social Services Documentary on Drug Addiction
- 1981 Composed songs for Frantic Follies Vaudeville Revue
- 1983 Composed Theme Song for Exploration Cruise Lines Christmas Cruise titled "We're Having Christmas On a Cruise"
- 1983 Composed for saxophone quartet "Sax Therapy" including Hillary's Bop performed in various public events and on CBC Radio
- 1986 Composed full score for Riverboat Warehouse Production in Carcross, Yukon
- 1987 Composed Song "Growing Up Beside You" recorded by Marie Gogo
- 1988 Composed "Gillian That's Me" for Gillian Campbell performed Internationally
- 1990 Composed Film Score for Documentary "Charles Tidds" (NFB)
  
- 1991 Composed Film Score for Industrial Film on "Workers of the Yukon " Theme Song "Proud to be a Worker" recorded
- 1991 Composed Theme Song for RCMP Gala Celebration at Yukon Arts Centre
- 1993 Composed Music for Arctic Winter Games Cultural Contingent
- 2001 Released 1st Full Length CD including original compositions
- 2004 Released 2nd Full Length CD including original compositions
- 2006 Released 2 Singles including "Second Honeymoon" charting Brazil at #64
- 2010 Released 3rd Full Length CD including original compositions
- 2011 Wrote and performed a jazz song for the Arts in the Park heritage songwriting challenge. "Another Whitehorse Kind of Day" has been performed in various venues since including with a jazz vocal choir in March 2013 at Jazz in the Hall
- 2012 Commissioned to compose complete score for full-length musical for "Dog Town". Script by Roy Ness, commissioned by Nakai Theatre; performed in 2012 and 2013.
- 2013 Composed four original works for performance by The Grant Simpson

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- Quintet at the 2013 Nanjing Jazz & World Music Festival
- 2013 –
- 2014 Commissioned to compose and perform original sound tracks for the Silver Scoundrel's (music for silent films), Brandon Isaak and Keith Picot
- 2015 Commissioned to compose and perform original sound track for "The Dowry, A Silent Comedy (film) by Keith Picot
- 2016 New score for production of "Dog Town" presented as part of the national Magnetic North Festival in Whitehorse

### **Artistic and music industry leadership**

As owner/operator of Frantic Follies Vaudeville Revue for the past 20 years and musical director for over 38 years, responsible for every aspect of the theatre including sound, lights, seating, ticketing, audience flow, front of house staff, cast and crew and budgeting the entire company.

As Artistic Director and manager of the Frantic Follies, has produced numerous shows off location for tourism promotion and private sector performances throughout North America.

Founder and Creator of Grant Simpson Vaudeville Productions 2018. Produced a series of 20 Full-Scale Vaudeville Shows for Northern Vision Development. The series called "The Klondike Follies" is being negotiated for a second year run in 2019.

Board Member, Home Routes/Chemin Chez Nous Society since 2014.

Serving as music industry leader in capacity as Chair/President of MusicYukon for 4 years and Manager, MusicYukon Resource Centre for 3 years, tied into national bodies such as FACTOR Board, WCMA (including first-ever awards and conference event north of 60 in 2011), national Home Routes/Chemin Chez Nous Board of Directors. Also serving on the boards of TIA Yukon, Yukon Arts Centre Board of Directors, Rotary Music Festival, Yukon Arts Council, Yukon Registered Music Teachers Association.

Fostering its development and overseeing Yukon's longest annual summer festival, Arts in the Park in Whitehorse (10 week season).

Producer, Musical Director and Artistic Director of the R.C.M.P. Anniversary Gala at Yukon Arts Centre.

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Producer, Musical Director and Manager of the Carcross Riverboat Warehouse Show for 3 years.

Musical Director for Exploration Cruise Lines in Mexico, Caribbean and Alaska (1986-89). Responsible for all entertainment and performances including show scheduling, band rehearsals and the over-all entertainment design of the two premiere ships, the Explorer Starship and Explorer North Star.

### Discography

Steeped in the tradition of swing and bebop jazz, Simpson's recent recordings illustrate his range of jazz styles and solo, duo and group formats.

Amongst dozens of recordings as a sideman in Nanaimo, Vancouver, and Victoria, Simpson, including sessions on international cruise ships, has contributed to many projects.

- 1987 Marie Gogo - Self-titled Album (Pianist, Composer), Canada
- 1990 Nicoles and Ray (Pianist), Canada
- 1999 Frantic Follies Cast Recording (Pianist, Composer, Musical Director, Arranger, Producer) Canada
- 2000 Grant Simpson - Seul-O Piano (Piano), Korea
- 2004 Grant Simpson - Stride and True (Piano)
- 2006 Kate Weekes - Kate Weekes (Piano)
- 2008 New Orleans North - Born 40 Years Too Late (Pianist, Composer, Arranger, Co-Producer)
- 2009 Sasquatch Prom Date - (Musical Saw, Banjo)
- 2010 Grant Simpson Kate Weekes - Beneath the Yukon Moon (Pianist, Composer, Guitar, Banjo, Arranger)
- 2013 Claire Ness - Hopeless Romantic (Piano)
- 2014 Two Piano Tornado (Piano)
- 2014 Kate Weekes - Frost On Black Fur (Piano)
- 2014 Memories for Harold: Traditional Fiddle Music with Keitha Clark
- 2017 Claire Ness - On the Trail
- 2017 Two Piano Tornado II
- 2018 Claire Ness Kids EP
- 2018 Dogtown the Musical Demo Recording
- 2019 Broccoli Farm: Claire Ness Kids CD