

Kiwanis Festival key to local piano man's success

*Deadline for festival **dance** entries is January 31 and deadline for **music** entries is February 10!*

January 24, 2018

Well known Okanagan solo performer, accompanist and music teacher Graham Vink credits his opportunities at more than a decade of Kelowna Kiwanis Festivals for part of his career success today.

Vink started playing piano at three, because he “wanted to do what the big kids did,” when they came to his house for his Mom’s piano lessons. Now he’s Artistic Director and teacher at the Kelowna Community Music School, a busy solo and collaborative pianist, and board director for the Kelowna Kiwanis Festival and the Registered Music Teachers’ Association.

Along the way to where he is today, Vink gained both Bachelor and Master’s Degrees in Music. But it’s his early Kiwanis Festival experiences from six to 16, and then again at 30, that gave him his start in live performance.

“There’s really nothing else like it,” says Vink. “If you want to share your music, you have to start getting out on stage and dealing with nerves, the preparation process and being in front of people—not just your teacher and parents.”

When Vink came back to Kelowna at 30, after two university degrees and working in a non-music job for a couple of years, he again entered the Kiwanis Festival in the open, non-competitive class.

“I needed to put myself on the spot and have that pressure to play from memory,” he says. “There was an adjudicator who gave me some useful comments, but I basically owned that concert venue for the best part of an hour! That was really good to push myself towards what I wanted to do with music here.”

Next week marks the first deadline to register for Kelowna’s 2018 Kiwanis Festival at www.KelownaKiwanisFestival.com. Dance registrations close **January 31**, and all other categories (see sidebar) close **February 10**. Festival participation includes performance reviews by professional adjudicators from across Canada, opportunities for awards and scholarships, and the chance to represent Kelowna at provincials.

The 2018 Kelowna Kiwanis Festival runs from February 26 to April 27, with a Gala Concert on May 18. In 2017, the festival provided \$10,000 in awards and hosted 3,000 participants, 5,000 audience members, and 1,000 volunteer hours.

The Kiwanis Festival, which is in its 92nd year, was founded as the Okanagan Valley Music Festival in 1926, as a one-day event. It became a tri-city event in 1936 with Kelowna, Penticton and Vernon taking turns hosting. The Kiwanis Club of Kelowna became the festival’s main sponsor in 1980, changing the name to the Kelowna Kiwanis Festival and making Kelowna its permanent home in 1981.

Media inquiries

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Festival Categories & Dates

(links to category info provided)

[Brass & Woodwinds](#): Apr. 8

[Choral](#): Mar. 8-9

[Composition](#): Apr. 8

[Concert Band](#): Apr. 24-26

[Dance](#): Feb. 26-Mar. 4

[Musical Theatre](#): Mar. 13

[Orchestra & Chamber](#): Apr. 9

[Piano](#): Apr. 23-27

[Speech & Dramatic Arts](#): Mar. 14

[Strings](#): Apr. 9-12

[Voice \(Classical\)](#): Mar. 11-12

[Voice \(Popular\)](#): Mar. 14

Gala Concert: May 18



Graham Vink says there’s nothing like the Kelowna Kiwanis Festival to give amateur performers experience.

