



neil patton

Pianist / Keyboardist / Singer / Composer / Songwriter

Musical Style: Contemporary solo piano, and piano-style rock, with a variety of moods. Neil's musical influences include Elton John, Keith Green, Tori Amos, Andrew Peterson, David Lanz, Journey, Kansas and Alan Parsons.

Bio: Neil Patton is a pianist/keyboardist, singer, songwriter, and performer working in Eugene, Oregon. He is a featured artist on the popular *Whisperings Solo Piano Radio* broadcast (www.solopianoradio.com). His 2015 CD, *Between Shadow and Light* (#13 on Zone Music Reporter Airplay Charts), was named Album of the Year at *MainlyPiano.com*, and was awarded 3rd place for Album of the Year "Solo Piano" at *One World Music Radio*. His 2012 release, *Hammer & Wire* was nominated for multiple awards. His single

Water of Life (from his debut album, *Impromptu*) reached the #23 spot on the *Whisperings* top 100 in 2012, and was one of 16 tracks included in the *Whisperings Vol I: Music to Quiet Your World* CD sampler released in 2011. *Clockwork*, the duet he composed and recorded with legendary pianist David Nevue, was released on Nevue's critically acclaimed album, *Winding Down* in 2015, and was named Song of the Year, 2015 at *MainlyPiano.com*.

Neil studied classical piano from the age of five through college. Graduating with honors from the University of Oregon School of Music and Dance in 1994, he has since maintained his residence in his birthplace, Eugene, Oregon. In 1996 Neil began to work full-time as a musician in various capacities. He opened a private piano teaching studio in 1997, and now teaches 30 students in his home office and at New Hope Christian College in Eugene. He also serves as Pastor of Worship Arts at Emerald Bible Fellowship. In his leftover time, he freelances, playing parties, concerts, and other special events, while also composing and arranging, and sometimes helping to arrange and produce music for other local artists. Neil performs regularly with his wife, Cathy, an accomplished flutist. They have been married since 1996 and have two children.

His first CD of original vocal music, *Horizon*, was released in 1998. Neil returned to the studio in 2007 to release *Impromptu*, a collection of solo piano pieces. His second solo piano collection, *Hammer & Wire*, was released in May of 2012. *Between Shadow and Light*, his third solo piano offering, was released in October, 2015. More projects are in development for release in 2017 and beyond.

Discography

Between Shadow and Light (2015)
Hammer & Wire (2012)
Impromptu (2007)
Horizon (1998)

CD's / Downloads / Streaming

www.neilpatton.net
www.CDBaby.com
www.Amazon.com
iTunes
www.Pandora.com/neil-patton

Sheet Music

www.neilpatton.net

Performance Calendar & Booking Information

www.neilpatton.net

Neil is available to play solo concerts, house concerts, church events, benefits, and background music for formal and casual events.

Email booking@neilpatton.net for more Information.

Awards/Nominations

***Between Shadow and Light*:** Winner: Album of the Year 2015 (*MainlyPiano.com*)

Winner: 3rd Place for Album of the Year "Solo Piano" (*One World Music Radio*)

Nominated: Album of the Year "Modern/Contemporary" (*SoloPiano.com*), and Album of the Year (*Enlightened Piano Radio*)

***Hammer & Wire*:** Nominated: Album of the Year 2012 (*Whisperings Radio*) and Album of the Year "Modern/Contemporary" (*SoloPiano.com*)

Clockwork (*Duet with David Nevue*): Winner: Song of the Year 2015 (*MainlyPiano.com*)

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Behind the keys...

What brought you to the piano, and what is your history with it?

I started my piano studies at age 5 with our next-door neighbor, who happened to be a wonderful teacher. She engaged us in composition and a deep feeling of rhythm from the beginning. When she moved away I began studies with Dorothy Munz, who taught me through high school. In Middle School, I was disenchanted with practicing and playing "dead people's music", although Dorothy continued to encourage my composition. During the summer before 7th grade, I found a songbook by my favorite rock group at the time. Suddenly I was practicing twice a day. My teacher worked with me on those songs, casually pointing out the harmonic theory in the rock music that Mozart and Bach also shared. I was hooked. I knew from then on that music was my calling. From there I continued my studies and graduated in 1994 from the University of Oregon with a degree in music.

Is there a secret to composing music?

Not really. For me, many songs come from improvising at gigs (or between students). Others hit me when I'm nowhere near a piano (usually in the shower or lying in bed). When I travel, I keep a hand-held recorder and notepad ready to quickly jot ideas down before they're lost. I currently have about 2 hours of 30-second snippets waiting to be finished (or thrown out) as a result of this habit. Lyrics take a lot of work, and require a lot of thought and revisions to avoid being trite or predictable. When I begin to seriously craft a song, I "spew" all my ideas out into some form I can review and revise. For many of the pieces I write, I have several versions recorded on my computer, each one a further evolution of the piece until each one finds a voice that I feel says what I want. Sometimes months of practice and revision happen between each recording, other times there are mere minutes as changes came to mind.

Are your songs written down on paper or do they just live in your head and in your recordings?

Depending on what each song requires, yes and no. When I require the help of other players, I write things out in a way that they can understand, trying to make their job easier. For solo pieces, the songs are mostly in my head (and recorded in my computer). The exception is when a piece requires very specific voicings of the notes, where "winging it" can't get the desired sound. Then out comes the paper. I have transcribed my performances from my solo piano collections, and they are available as sheet music on my website. The rise of notation software has made this a much easier process than it was when I was studying in school.

What music has influenced you, your playing, and your composing?

My earliest inspiration came from Elton John and Keith Green. Over the years I've been most inspired by artists who rise above the instant gratification of rock and combine it with older forms from classical and jazz music. These artists included prog groups like Kansas, Rush, Yes, Genesis and the Dixie Dregs, as well as jazz fusion groups such as the Chick Corea Elektric Band and the Yellowjackets. Later years have brought me under the influence of gifted songwriters such as Sarah McLachlan, Peter Gabriel, Ellis Paul, Andrew Peterson, Toto, and Mark Alan (a local Eugene singer/songwriter). Of course, the great composers, both historic and modern, have provided much joy and challenge, such as Chopin, Mozart, Brahms, Arvo Pärt, Debussy and Beethoven (to name a few).

What do you recommend to young pianists and other musicians who want to pursue music as a career?

Study your craft! Reading music is not required to be successful. But why not learn and open up all the doors and opportunities reading and technique can provide? I'm unlocking so many ideas in my writing lately just by going down new harmonic avenues I wouldn't even have been aware of without understanding jazz and classical theory. There's no such thing as too much musical knowledge. (I suppose the trick is to then limit yourself when writing and playing so as not to over-write or over-play.) When you hear a tricky rhythmic or technical idea that might heighten the emotion of a song, you'll be able to play it without frustration. I have so much to learn about playing, arranging and composing. I hope I never stop learning!