



Walter Ostanek Band

The Walter Ostanek Story

The story of “Canada’s Polka King”, Walter Ostanek begins in the small town of Duparquet, Quebec, where he was born Ladislav John Ostanek on April 20, 1935, of Slovenian heritage (decent).

When he was four, Walter’s family moved to the St.Catharines, Ontario area and by the age of nine, Walter began playing the button diatonic accordion. At age 12, he received his first piano accordion, and only four years later, in 1951, he broadened his horizons and formed his own group, his first Country Western/polka Band.

Two years later, he had joined with Abbie Andrews and the Canadian Ranch Boys, and was an instrumental part of their radio show, (three programs a week).

At age 21, Walter felt he was ready to proceed further on his own, and on Saturday, January 26, 1957, his new band played its first engagement at the German Village in Niagara Falls, Ontario the day had finally come after 13 years of study, hard work, and determination. Walter’s dream had come true – the Walter Ostanek Band was now a reality.

The next milepost in Walter’s life bears the date February 22, 1957, when he and his bride, Irene, exchanged their vows in marriage. With their two children, they now reside in St.Catharines, Ontario, Canada.

In his leisure time, Walter favours a quiet evening at home, where he immerses himself in his favorite music, including Polkas and Country. Some of his favorite artists are; America’s Polka King, Frankie Yankovic, and Country artists, Ray Price, George Strait, Randy Travis, Charlie Pride, George Jones, Alan Jackson, and Clint Black, to name a few.

Some other favorite pastimes are collecting Polka and Country LP’s and CD’s, collecting autographs, and photography, video, and DVD recordings.

Other than working with the band, Walter owns “Walter Ostanek Music Centre Ltd.” at 41 Geneva Street in St.Catharines, Ontario, Canada.

To Walter, the title “Canada’s Polka King” is much more than just a name. It is a special honour that carries with it an obligation to a special dedication and a promise to his fans and followers that wherever and whenever the Walter Ostanek Band appears in public, the band will do their utmost to please the audience and keep them happy.

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It's through this special kind of hard work, and dedication through the past 51 years that Walter has managed many memorable accomplishments:

- 35 years weekly radio show on CHOW 1470 AM, Welland, Ontario
- Since his first LP, "Gay Continental Dance Party", recorded in 1963, the Walter Ostanek Band has recorded 88 LP's.
- He has recorded 24 singles / 45 rpm releases
- 1974 Gold Record Award from ARC Recording Co., Toronto, Ontario
- Honoured and received Keys to the City from Collingwood, Ontario; Warton, Ontario; Youngstown, Ohio; and Euclid, Ohio, U.S.A.
- Dedicated Walter Ostanek Pavilion, Montebello Park, St. Catharines
- T.V. Appearances:
 - Juno Awards Show (1994)
 - Pig & Whistle Show
 - Johnny Carson Show
 - Lawrence Welk Show
 - Phil Donahue Show
 - Canada's Walk Way of Fame T.V. Show (2001)
 - Polka Variety Show
 - Jay Leno, The Tonight Show
 - Tommy Hunter Show
 - Grand Ole Opry, Nashville TN.
 - One Hour Special: Cult of Walt
 - Rick Mercer Show
- 33 years of Oktoberfest for Lions Club Kitchener, Ontario, Canada
- Many T.V. Telethons, Local Charities, Gyro-Lyons Rotary, March of Dimes Clubs, Heart & Stroke
- Local and Network Radio and T.V. shows
- Has appeared aboard cruise ships: SS Norway, SS Vera Cruz, and SS Costa Riviera
- Five tours to Hawaii
- Tour of Italy, Austria, Slovenia, and Holland
- Won Silver medal for one-hour Christmas Special, in which over 200 other shows competed
- Only Canadian inducted into the IPA Polka Hall of Fame in Chicago, Illinois (1983)
- Only Canadian inducted into the National Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame in Cleveland, Ohio, (November 26, 1988)
- Has received over 100 citations, plaques, and various awards
- Grand Parade Marshall, Grape & Wine Festival, St. Catharines, Ontario (2005)
- Grand Parade Marshall, Warton, Ontario (2007)
- Grande Parade Marshall, Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest (1993 & 2009)
- Folk Arts Parade Marshall, St. Catharines, Ontario (1995)
- Won first prize for Best Oktoberfest Band at Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest, (1988, 1991, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, & 2010.
- Grammy Award Winner, Best Polka Album, "35th Anniversary", 1992
- Grammy Award Winner, Best Polka Album, "Accordionally Yours", 1993
- Grammy Award Winner, Best Polka Album, "Music and Friends", 1994
- Song of the year, IPA Award, Chicago, Illinois (1990)
- Inducted into Broadcasters Hall of Fame, Akron, Ohio, (only Canadian), (1990)

- Musician of the Year, Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame, Cleveland, Ohio (1990)
- University of Hard Knocks Hall of Fame (1991)
- Three radio shows on CHOW 1470, Welland, Ontario, Canada
- Four years of television, Channel 11 CHCH-TV, Hamilton, “Polka Party”
- 17 consecutive years, TV show, “Polka Time”, Channel 13 CKCO-TV Kitchener, Ontario
- One hour TV special, filmed in Germany and Austria (1987)
- One hour TV special, CBC “One More Time with Frankie Yankovic”
- Weekly TV show, Polka Rama, Regina Sask. (2005, 2006, 2007, 2008)
- One hour Christmas Special for Television (1987)
- Appeared in Laughlin and Las Vegas, Nevada
- Appeared in concert with such artists as; Roy Clark, Oakridge Boys, Ronnie Milsap, Ray Price, George Jones, Mel Tillis, Brenda Lee, Razy Bailey, Slim Whitman, John Conlee, Charlie Pride, Tom T. Hall, T.G. Shepherd, Tommy Hunter, Lawrence Welk, Myron Floren, Daniel O’ Donnell, Frankie Yankovic, Dick Contino, and many others.
- Man of the Year, P.O.P.P., Youngstown, Ohio (1984)
- SOCAN Lifetime Achievement Award (2007)
- Long Play LP’s, “Polka Stadia, Volumes 1 and 2” inducted into the National Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame, (November 25, 1989)
- Album of The Year, Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame, (1993, 1995, and 2004)
- Band of the Year, Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame, (1993)
- World of Music Lifetime Achievement Award, Cleveland Ohio, (1999)
- Order of Canada Award, (April 26, 2000)
- Iron World Minnesota Hall of Fame, (2000)
- Received a star on Canada’s Walk Way of Fame, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, (June 1, 2001)
- Hosted a one-hour TV show, “Musikanten Stadl”, from Austria, (taped in Toronto, Canada, 1994)
- Special Guest, 30th Anniversary (Ansambel Lojze Slak), Slovenia
- 25 consecutive years, June to September, Marineland, Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada
- Doctor of Law Award, Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario, (1995)

Walter has given 53 years of dedication to his family, band, and in particular, to the promotion of Polka Music. At home his mailbox is shaped like an accordion. His band’s truck license plate is “OSTANEK”, and his cars are: “POLKA”, “POLKA1”, “POLKA2”, “WALTZ”, “4POLKA”, and “1-WJO-1”.

Walter works very hard at his craft and he expects, moreover, he demands that his fellow musicians do likewise...and when performing on stage, the result is a happy blend of enthusiasm and mutual respect. His obvious love of good music is combined with talent to create a winning combination that has earned Walter Ostanek the title, “Canada’s Polka King”...and has earned the band a devoted audience.

Walter Says...”We Love our Fans!”

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