



Walter Ostanek Band

The story of Walter Ostanek, “Canada’s Polka King”, begins in the small town of Duparquet, Quebec, where he was born Ladislav John Ostanek on April 20, 1935, of Slovenian heritage (descent). Who could have known then, that this young boy would become the world’s polka music ambassador.

When he was four, Walter’s family moved to the St.Catharines, Ontario area, and by the age of nine, Walter began playing polka music on 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 per week).

At age 22, Walter felt he was ready to proceed further on his own, and on Sunday, 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 leisure time, Walter favours a quiet evening at home, where he immerses himself in his favorite music including Polka Music and Country. Some of his favourite 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 favourite pastimes are collecting Polka and Country LP’s and CD’s, collecting autographs, photography, and video, and DVD recordings.

To Walter Ostanek, the title, “Canada’s Polka King” is much more than just a name. It is, to Walter 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.

It is through this special kind of hard work and dedication throughout the 59 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 100 LP's.

- He has recorded 20 singles / 45 rpm releases.
- 1974 Gold Record Award from ARC Recording Co., Toronto, Ontario.
- Honoured and received Keys to the City of Collingwood, Ontario, Niagara Falls, Ontario, Youngstown, Ohio, and Euclid, Ohio USA.

TV appearances as follows:

Juno Award Show(1994)	Pig & Whistle Show
Johnny Carson Show	Lawrence Welk Show
Phil Donahue Show	Canada's Way of Fame TV 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

- 37 years of Oktoberfest for the Lions Club, Kitchener, Ontario Canada
- Many TV Telethons, Local Charities, Gyro-Lions, Lions Club, Rotary, March of Dimes Clubs, Heart & Stroke.
- Local and Network Radio and TV shows.
- Has appeared aboard 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 were entered.
- 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.
- Grande Parade Marshall, Grape & Wine Festival St.Catharines, Ontario (2005) (2009) Wine Festival Parade Marshall (2008).
- 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, 1998, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2009, 2010, and 2012).
- Oktoberfest People's Choice Award (2010).
- 21 Nominations for the Polka Grammy (NARAS), (1986, 1988, 1989, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008).
- 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 the 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 with "Polka Party".
- 24 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 Frank Yankovic”.
- Weekly Television show, “Polka Rama”, Regina, Saskatchewan (2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014).
- One hour Christmas Special for Television (1987).
- Appeared in Laughlin, and Las Vegas, Nevada.
- Has appeared in concert with such artists as; Roy Clark, Oakridge Boys, Ronnie Milsap, Ray Price, George Jones, Mel Tillis, Brenda Lee, Razyzy Bailey, Slim Whitman, John Conlee, Tom T. Hall, T.G. Shepard, Tommy Hunter, Lawrence Welk, Myron Floren, Crystal Gale, Frank Yankovic, Dick Contino, and John Mc Dermott.
- Man of the Year P.O.P.P, Youngstown, Ohio (1984).
- SOCAN Lifetime Achievement Award (2007).
- Long Play LP’s “Polka Stadia, Volumes I and II” inducted into the National Cleveland-Style 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 of Fame, Toronto, Ontario, Canada (June 1, 2001).
- Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Award (2012).
- Pac Pace Music Award Winner (2011-2012).
- Montebello Park Pavillion, St.Catharines, Ontario, named in Walter Ostanek’s Honour.
- Hosted a one-hour TV Show “Musikanten Stadl” from Austria (Toronto, Canada) (1994).
- Niagara Life Time Music Award 2009.
- Special Guest, 30th Anniversary (Ansambel Lojze Slak) Slovenia.
- 31 consecutive years, June to September, Mainland, Niagara Falls, Ontario.
- Doctor of Law Award, Brock University, St.Catharines, Ontario (1995).
- Walter has given 59 years of dedication to his family, band, and in particular, for the promotion of Polka Music.
- At home his mailbox is shaped like and accordion.
- His band’s truck license plate is “OSTANEK”, and the cars are” “POLKA”, “POLKA1”, “POLKA2”, “WALTZ”, “4POLKA”, AND “1-WJO1”
- Rotary Club of St.Catharines, Ontario.
- Rotary Club of Kitchener, Ontario, Paul Harris Award.
- One Hour TV Special “Cult of Walt”.
- Lions Quest Canada.

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.

The 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!”