

The logo for Kamloops Daily News features the word "KAMLOOPS" in a red, sans-serif font above the words "The Daily News" in a large, blue, bold, sans-serif font. A yellow sun-like shape is partially visible behind the "KAMLOOPS" text.

KAMLOOPS The Daily News

Published October 16, 2009

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Piano strikes common chord as jazz meets opera
By MIKE YOUDS Daily News Staff Reporter

Two emerging Canadian stars from separate artistic galaxies shine on stage Monday at St. Paul's Cathedral.

Chris and Natalie Donnelly share their lives together and a passion for music; he is a Juno-nominated jazz pianist, she an operatic soprano and solo artist.

They generally lead separate performance careers but come together on stage in a short Western Canadian tour that includes stops in Salmon Arm Sunday and in Kamloops the night after.

"The opportunity doesn't arise as much as we'd like it to," Chris Donnelly said from Calgary Wednesday. "Any chance we get to perform together, we take it."

The result is an unusual variety as he accompanies her in song and performs his piano pieces. Even within his repertoire there is a wide range, including music written and inspired by the late Doug Riley (aka Dr. Music) and new works inspired by the graphic art of M.C. Escher. Chris is in the process of completing a recording called *Metamorphosis*, which alludes to one of Escher's artworks of the same name.

"I didn't base the music on the actual piece, although it did provide quite a bit of inspiration," he explained. "It's more the underlying concept. When the project is finished, there will be about 50 minutes of nonstop music, and within that 50 minutes there will be 10 different pieces linked thematically."

His debut album, *Solo*, was nominated this year for the traditional jazz album Juno.

Natalie is in demand for solo performances and opera productions in Canada and the U.S. Two years ago she sang the role of Violetta in *La Traviata* in Toronto. This spring she played the lead role of Matilde in the world premiere of the contemporary opera *I Confess, I Have Lived*, an exploration of poetry and lives of Pablo Neruda and Matilde Urrutia.

She will sing arias by Giuseppe Verdi, Giacomo Puccini and George Gershwin.

The couple met while attending university. As their relationship blossomed, he began accompanying her on piano. Steeped in classical music as well as jazz, he acquired a new appreciation for opera.

"Natalie would be singing *La Traviata* — performing and rehearsing constantly — and tell me, 'This is where she dies.' She's giving me all the inside edge on opera pieces."

Co-presented by Living Arts and Entertainment Management, the concert begins at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are

available in advance from Kamloops Live! Box Office.

© Copyright 2009, kamloopsnews.ca

Story URL: <http://kamloopsnews.ca/article/20091016/KAMLOOPS0501/310169994>