

Dirk Bertels

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Dirk Bertels - 2014 Biography

Born in Belgium 1956, Dirk studied classical music theory and piano at the Mechelen Music Conservatorium from the age of 10. He took up guitar and the 5 string banjo from age 14 onwards.

Dirk migrated to Australia in 1978 and received Australian citizenship in 1981. He married in 1983 and soon had 2 children who are now grown up.

In 1987, Dirk finished his degree in Contemporary Music at the then TSIT, now part of the Tasmanian Conservatorium where he learned the additional skills of Jazz improvisation (piano), composing and arranging.

Dirk has played piano professionally in various bands such as *Cuban Aardvark* (Afro Cuban), *Big Dilemma* (Rock, Reaggae, originals), *Panama Circus Band* (Covers Jazz, Balad, Rock), *Djoumba* (Afro-Cuban covers and originals), and *Wahida* (African originals). He has accompanied vocalists such as *Philippa Rooke*, *Vanessa Holmes* and *Ajak Kwai* on keyboards and banjo.

Dirk has composed and arranged many tunes. He has taught music theory and instrument technique both to individuals and institutions such as the Lilydale school in Tasmania.

Dirk enjoys doing research and writing in general and has written extensively on the 5 string banjoⁱ. He is currently in the process of creating instructional material for the 5 string banjo and has written on a wide variety of topics such as *The Origin of Western Music Language*ⁱⁱ, *Music Practice and Performance*ⁱⁱⁱ and *J.S. Bach*^{iv} including video performances of some of his favourite keyboard works^v.

In 1998, Dirk toured North Wales, playing banjo in a duo with accordion player Sian Phillips. He also performed as a solo Jazz pianist during this time in Wales.

Having worked as an Electronics Technician for a great part of his life^{vi}, Dirk acquired professional knowledge in the field of audio electronics, having built and repaired audio gear such as speakers, amplifiers, mixers, and synthesizers.

From 2006 to 2013 Dirk worked as a software developer in the medical electronics industry^{vii} during which he created various music programs^{viii} in his spare time. His vast knowledge on audio software provided him with the tools necessary to gain considerable expertise in the fields of audio mixing, midi sequencing, recording, mastering and audio sampling.

Dirk recently developed a solo act, titled *The Joy of Life* for 5 string banjo and vocals with original background music. It aims at introducing the public to various aspects of the banjo, including its African heritage. The music encompasses a wide variety of styles including Old Time, Bluegrass, Newgrass, Celtic, Balad, Salsa and Afro, many of which are original. His website devotes a whole page to this project at http://www.dirkbertels.net/music/joy_of_life.php, including videos and scores.^{ix}

Please visit Dirk's personal website at <http://www.dirkbertels.net> which demonstrates his natural interests in the various fields.

- i* The 5 string Banjo: <http://www.dirkbertels.net/music/banjo.php> ,
Celtic music on the banjo: http://www.dirkbertels.net/music/banjo_iriish.php ,
Banjo physics and setup: http://www.dirkbertels.net/music/banjo_lutherie.php
- ii* Constructing scales: http://www.dirkbertels.net/music/constructing_scales.html
Western Music Language: http://www.dirkbertels.net/music/western_music_language.html
Scales and tuning: http://www.dirkbertels.net/music/scales_and_tuning.html
Scaling the fretboard: <http://www.dirkbertels.net/music/fretboard.php>
String Tension: <http://www.dirkbertels.net/music/tension.php>
- iii* Music Practice and Performance: <http://www.dirkbertels.net/music/practice.php>
- iv* J.S. Bach, a compilation: http://www.dirkbertels.net/music/bach_compiled.php ,
Bach Excerpts Analysis: http://www.dirkbertels.net/music/bach_workbooks.php
- v* Bach Performances: http://www.dirkbertels.net/music/favourite_Bach_performances.php
- vi* 2001 – 2003: *Electronics Technician: Nunatak - assembling computer systems*
Barking Spider: Tasmanian Technopark - electronics assembly
1995 – 1998: *Production Manager: Aquasmart, Technopark - Full Time*
- vii* 2006 – 2013: *Computer Scientist, Software Development, CAD design and CAM*
Vision Instruments – Technopark, Dowsing Point
- viii* Band Management: *A Java Database that organises musicians' tours and performances.*
DbTutor: Java application that teaches piano grooves.
- ix* The Joy of Life: www.dirkbertels.net/music/joy_of_life.php