

Whether performing the masterworks of Scott Joplin or the score to *Star Wars*, **Martin Spitznagel** is truly at home on the piano bench.

A sought-after performer and decorated composer, he found success early, winning a Yamaha Disklavier at the age of 14 in Calliope Media's nationwide *Crazy for Ragtime* competition. His entry, chosen from the hundreds of submissions by a panel of judges that included world-renowned violinist Itzhak Perlman, coincided with the centennial of the birth of ragtime music in 1897.

Despite this early success, Martin was largely self-guided until 1998, when he met Eastman School of Music pianist and pedagogue Dr. Tony Caramia, who challenged him to "find the surprise" in every performance.

In 2011, Martin was selected as the Scott Joplin Foundation's Artist in Residence, and in May he claimed the title "World Champion of Old-Time Piano Playing" at the [World Championship Old-Time Piano Playing Contest](#).

In addition to his musical pursuits, Martin holds a B.A. in Creative Writing, a Certificate in Medieval and Renaissance Studies, and an A.S. in Filmmaking. This diverse skill set has enabled him to work on everything from a documentary film about polio with "St. Elmo's Fire" screenwriter Carl Kurlander to directing his own epic *Star Wars* fan film, [Star Wars: Hunt for the Holocron](#).

~~It was 1964 in upstate New York when **Danny Coots** began playing drums at the tender age of 6 years old. Since then, he has studied with Nick Baffaro, Rich Holly, Alan Koffman and Jim Petercsak in percussion.~~

Danny attended The Crane School of Music and St. Lawrence University. He eventually served as adjunct faculty at St. Lawrence University, Clarkson University and Potsdam State University from the 1970s into the 1990s.

He continued traveling and performing with David Amram, Ray Shiner, Daniel Pinkham, Herb Ellis, Will Alger, Jack Mayhue, Speigle Wilcox, Mimi Hines, Phil Ford, Bob Darch, Pearl Kaufman and Arthur Duncan.

In 1996 Danny moved to Nashville, Tennessee and has lived there ever since. Danny has recorded extensively in Nashville, New York and L.A. and has appeared in over 100 countries. He has played on over 100 recordings, one of which won a Grammy in 2005.

After moving to Tennessee, Danny joined the Jack Daniel's Silver Cornet Band for 5 years and helped found the Titan Hot Seven. During this time he played and recorded with Dick Hyman, Houston Person, Bob Wilber, Johnny Varro, Jeff Coffin, Tim Laughlin, Harry Allen, Dave Hungate, Bill Allred, John Allred, Randy Reinhart, Ron Hockett, John Cocuzzi, John Sheridan, Dan Barrett, Vince Giordano, Rebecca Kilgore, Ken Peplowski, Duke Heitger, Neville Dickie,