



# Bios

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Bridge & Wolak are a globe-trotting musical duo from Canada who create life-affirming concerts full of beauty, virtuosity and humour.

Michael Bridge, accordion, and Kornel Wolak, clarinet (both also play piano), met over a decade ago and immediately established an artistic alliance based on the attraction of opposites: Wolak - intensely focussed with a world view infused with sardonic humour; Bridge- flexible and fearless with a playful wit.

They share a love of classical, jazz and world music, a fascination with fusing genres and a passion for performance. They've logged about 350,000 kilometres on the road - from Kraków to Quito, from Nancy, France to Fargo, ND - about the same distance as a trip to the moon.

Their concert offerings include a survey of musical hits from the 17th century to today, a program inspired by travel to the cosmos and a look at the outrageously scandalous behaviour of some of the greatest composers of all time.

Their most recent production is Tangorium, a seductive, multi-media exploration of the evolution of the tango for orchestra and soloists.

B & W have also developed an on-line music mentorship program for students wondering whether a life in the arts is right for them...and how to make a living if the answer is yes.

Bridge & Wolak share an ambitious agenda - to create unforgettable experiences for audiences through bold original programs that are irreverent, meticulously prepared and completely in-the-moment. They invite you to join them on their slightly unruly musical adventures, wherever they might lead.

[www.bridgewolak.com](http://www.bridgewolak.com)

Instagram: [@bridgewolak](https://www.instagram.com/bridgewolak)

Facebook: [/bridgewolak](https://www.facebook.com/bridgewolak)

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What they have in common is a love of classical, jazz and world music, a fascination with fusing genres and a passion for performance. They play dozens of original shows every year, exploring everything from Bach to Benny Goodman and figure they've logged about 350,000 kilometres on the road - from Kraków to Quito, from Nancy, France to Fargo, ND - about the same distance as a trip to the moon.

Those concerts include a survey of musical hits from the 17th century to today, a program inspired by travel to the cosmos and a look at the outrageously scandalous behaviour of some of the greatest composers of all time.

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Bridge began playing when he was 5 and growing up in Calgary. His mom bought an accordion at a garage sale for \$5. A family friend started teaching him to play by ear. Formal lessons began at 7.

Today he performs on a digital accordion - essentially a computer housed in a conventional accordion case that can imitate the sound of just about any instrument

you can imagine. He can single-handedly shake the rafters sounding like a full rock drum kit or a symphony orchestra.

He's also a master of the more familiar acoustic accordion, a soulful, highly expressive instrument. Bridge received his Doctor of Musical Arts Degree from the University of Toronto and was a Rebanks Fellow at the Glenn Gould School in Toronto.

Wolak received his doctorate from the Paderewski Music Academy in Poznan, Poland.

He grew up in Włocławek, a small city west of Warsaw. His parents were both professional musicians and by the age of 5 Wolak was taking piano lessons and dreaming of becoming a famous musician.

At 12, Wolak took up the clarinet and became obsessed with mastering the instrument. At 16 he left home for studies at the conservatory in Poznan. At 17 he received a scholarship to Indiana University in the US.

After encountering the challenges of being an international student on a tight budget, he arrived in Toronto in 2005 for studies at the Royal Conservatory of Music. Canada offered him a safe harbour, a place to launch a stellar international career as a soloist and an off-ramp to pursue his impressive academic achievements. Today, Wolak tours widely and is on faculty at Queen's University in Kingston, Ont.

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