



Athens Symphony

Jim McKillip, piano soloist

Jim began piano lessons at age 4 as a student of Helen Carter in Montgomery Alabama. While in junior high in Selma, Alabama, he was invited to perform on a local TV show in Montgomery, hosted by country star Jack Turner. Jim performed on his show multiple times playing piano.

In the eighth grade, he chose to play the trumpet in the high school band. Since the school had no beginner band program, he learned to play the instrument by playing along with Louis Armstrong records. His trumpet and piano playing continued through his high school years at A G Parrish High in Selma, Alabama and Marietta High School in Marietta Georgia.

In 1963, he entered the University of Georgia as a music education major with trumpet as his major instrument. At UGA he studied with trumpet teachers Roger L. Dancz, Calvin Hasbrook, Cecil Welch, and Albert Ligotti. While at UGA, he was the solo trumpet player for the DIXIE REDCOAT BAND. Although piano was not his major, he performed on piano with various jazz groups throughout the area. In 1966, he became a member of the Atlanta Federation of Musicians Union and began playing professionally in the Atlanta area.

After finishing his music degree at UGA, he was the band director at two middle schools in Athens for five years before opening his own music business, McKillip Music, which he operated until 2001. Jim has performed with many groups around the Athens and Atlanta area, and has played behind such stars as Bob Hope, Fabian, The Platters, Jan and Dean, Rich Little, Dionne Warwick, Paul Revere and the Raiders, Aretha Franklin, and Sharon Owens. He has also performed throughout the US with Atlanta stars Cecil Welch, and Mac Frampton.