

Kelly Knowlton

Kelly was born and raised right here in Mansfield, Ohio. She has been singing since she could walk (and possibly before), and has spent the majority of her life as an avid participant in musical performances and ensembles of all types, ranging from jazz to musical theatre to marching band, as well as chamber ensembles and solo recitals. While earning her Bachelor's Degree in Music Education from Ashland University, she was the recipient of numerous vocal awards, including 1st place prizes from the National Association of Teachers of Singing, and superlative honors from the Ashland University Department of Music. She was a featured soloist with numerous ensembles, as well as with the Ashland Symphony Orchestra. During her time there she also performed a varied repertoire of classical works, including oratorio, opera, and operetta, but it was also there that she discovered her passion for jazz music, honing her vocal, piano, and trumpet skills.

Kelly has been active in the theatre community throughout her life, performing onstage at The Renaissance Theater for the first time at age 7. Regionally, Kelly has performed roles in *The Little Mermaid* (Ursula), *Hairspray!* (Tracy Turnblad), *Oklahoma* (Laurie Williams), *South Pacific* (Nellie Forbush), *Damn Yankees* (Gloria), *Into the Woods* (Cinderella), *Violet*, and *Joseph & the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. She also holds several musical directing credits to her name, lending her talents to the Renaissance Theater's productions of *Sister Act*, *A Christmas Story*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, and *Newsies*.

Kelly can be seen performing with Just Jazz Live in Cleveland and in numerous other venues throughout the state of Ohio. She favors the classics of the Great American Songbook, but always welcomes the opportunity to throw a wildcard into the mix, citing as influences the likes of Ella Fitzgerald, Natalie Cole, Rosemary Clooney, Kurt Elling, Diana Krall, Diane Schuur, as well as Adele, Lady Gaga, and Eva Cassidy. Kelly is also a featured performer with Stardust, The Artistic Jazz Orchestra, and with Ashland's Kroc Center Big Band as both a vocalist and pianist.

Kelly is in her 11th year as a music educator, and is currently teaching PreK-8th grade at St. Edward School. She also leads worship at Park Street Brethren Church in Ashland. Kelly and her handsome bearded husband Steve are the proud parents of three beautiful, inquisitive, and rambunctious girls, Olive, Georgia, and Winifred. When she is not teaching or making music, Kelly enjoys tinkering in her basement full of craft supplies, and making complicated ethnic recipes with entirely too many ingredients.

