

# The Uptown Band featuring Erich Cawalla and Jenifer Kinder

## Bio



In the summer of 2010, Erich Cawalla and Jenifer Kinder - the musical visionaries behind the extraordinarily popular ensemble The Uptown Band - surprised over a thousand fans in their hometown of Shillington, PA by saying their vows and "tying the knot" on stage. Sharing such a moment in public makes perfect sense considering the exhilarating musical synergy the couple has created with audiences in their home region of the Northeast and beyond since 2006. Stirring up an explosive, melodic and grooving mix of Jazz, Funk, Rock, and Pop, the multi-talented Cawalla, Kinder, and their evolving group of musicians (a four piece rhythm section featuring 2 horns) have headlined hundreds of shows and numerous charitable functions.

The Uptown Band has long supported the American Red Cross and the American Cancer Society, performing at several ACS walks over the years. They also perform at an annual fundraiser for the PA Coalition Against Rape, chaired by former US Homeland Security Chief Tom Ridge and his wife Michelle. They have done shows as far West as Reno, where they played at The Nugget on two occasions and among many other private functions, have played for 4-Time Super Bowl Winner/former Detroit Lions GM Matt Millen. The band has even opened up for popular Comedian Jeff Dunham.

The Uptown Band has grown beyond its regional roots and become a truly national and international sensation since the release of their stylistically eclectic, critically acclaimed full length album debut *Waiting For Her*. TV-wise, they have performed twice on NBC New York's Late Night talk show "All Night With Joey Reynolds". In addition to having their own listing on Pandora Radio, their songs have been heard on the national cable system Music Choice and DMX Satellite Radio. In the U.S. , their music has been featured on numerous terrestrial radio stations in such markets as Quad Cities, Iowa (KMXG 96.1 FM) and Chicago, where WLFM 87.7 FM spun their holiday recording "Merry Christmas Baby." The singles "Waiting For Her" and "You Treated Me Good" were both the #1 Most Added tracks in their week of release on the Groove Jazz Radio chart. Around the world, they enjoy brisk album sales in Japan and airplay on a unique array of stations, including Hawkesbury 89.9 in Sydney, Australia and Phoenix FM 98 in Brentwood , UK .

While Erich likes to compare the relationship and performance style he and Jenifer have to iconic musical couples of past eras like Louis Prima and Keely Smith and Sonny & Cher, the vibe they create with The Uptown Band—while drawing from old school jazz and soul elements—is hip, cool and contemporary. Embodying their exciting blend of musical vibes, he describes the follow up CD the band is currently working on as "Alicia Keys meets Tower of Power meets Bobby Caldwell."

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"We formed The Uptown Band with the intent of being able to do any type of show, and we originally started with a set list of only cover material," says Erich. "As we have evolved, we have not only diversified our sound but incorporated a lot of strong original material, which inspired us to become independent recording artists as well. While we've enjoyed an inspiring amount of success in our home state and the Northeast, doing from 150-200 gigs a year at one point, we've always had our eye on becoming a band that performs all around the U.S. and eventually, throughout the world. We've got a big sound that is hard to contain, and we want to share the musical joy with as many people as possible."

Erich and Jenifer each bring a unique musical background to their leadership of The Uptown Band. Erich, whose versatility includes playing all saxes, flute, clarinet, and even a degree in Accounting, was a featured vocalist and saxophonist with the Bobby Mercer Road Show. Jenifer, a native of Reading, PA, has been singing since the age of five. She began studying voice at age 8 and became heavily involved with local theatre companies, landing leading roles in "Annie," "The Music Man," and "Peter Pan." At age 14, she began working with producer Scott Verret and recorded jingles, commercials and theme songs for Easter Seals and The United Way.

Some of Erich's more notable performances include shows at Florida State University for the 2000 Florida Republican Inauguration Gala, Charlotte's Independence Arena, the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, Walt Disney World, numerous Atlantic City showrooms and lounges, and Carnegie Hall as a senior in high school. He has performed as a sideman for Marie Osmond and The Skyliners, and has opened for Martha and the Vandellas, Harold Melvin's Blue Notes and Sonny Turner. Jenifer's notable performances include opening for country music sensations Joe Nichols, Mark Wills, and David Ball. Both have been featured soloists with the Reading POPS Orchestra and the Hershey Big Band.

"I believe the key to our success with The Uptown Band is the way Jenifer and I, working with some of the best musicians around, connect with our audiences," says Erich. "I learned a long time ago when I was a backing musician the importance of breaking down that barrier between the performer and those who come to see you play--and in many cases, are spending their hard earned money to do so. Getting married in front of our fans was a real joy because it allowed them to enter our world in a deeper way than ever before. We love sharing our personal and musical joy this way and are so grateful for all the support they have given us over the years. Now that the rest of the country and world is becoming aware of us, it's exciting to think about what the future may hold."

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## Live Performances



- Atlantic City Beach Fest** - Atlantic City, NJ
- Bedford County Fall Foliage Festival** - Bedford, PA
- Berks Jazz Fest** - Reading, PA
- Bethlehem Musikfest** - Bethlehem, PA
- Gerald Veasley's Jazz Base** - Reading, PA
- John Ascuaga's Nugget** - Reno, NV
- Kipona Festival** - Harrisburg, PA
- Nissley Vineyards Lawn Concert Series** - Bainbridge, PA
- Punxsutawney Groundhog Festival** - Punxsutawney, PA
- Reading City Park Band Shell Concert Series** - Reading, PA
- Springettsbury Township Concert Series** - York, PA

## Accomplishments

- Two appearances on NBC's "All Night with Joey Reynolds" TV Show shot at the NASDAQ Building Studio in Times Square, New York
- Original songs receiving airplay on Music Choice National Cable Radio, DMX National Satellite Radio, and Pandora Internet Radio
- Received chartbound status on Billboard Smooth Jazz Charts, Summer 2011
- Performed as sidemen with The Skyliners, Marie Osmond, The Dovells, and Little Anthony and the Imperials
- Rising Star Award from Gigmasters.com
- Performed for former National Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge and former Detroit Lions CEO/4-Time SuperBowl winner Matt Millen
- Studied voice with David Rutt and studied woodwinds with Larry McKenna, James Michael, Tom Strohmman, and Dave Depalma
- Member of the National Recording Academy and BSBA in Accounting, Shippensburg University of PA, 2001

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## Reviews



**Erich Cawalla** (Bottom Left)  
- Manager, Lead Vocals, Saxophone

**Jenifer Kinder** (Center)  
- Lead Vocals, Percussion

**Dewey Wahl** (Bottom Right)  
- Guitar, Vocals

**Dave Fenwick** (Top Center)  
- Keyboards, Vocals, Musical Director

**Lamont Bates** (Bottom Center) - Bass, Vocals

**Steve Strawley** (Top Right)  
- Trumpet, Flugelhorn

**Mike "Killer" Humbert** (Top Left)  
- Drums

"Sometimes it's tricky translating live energy to the studio, but the band, trying to expand its base beyond its home region of Pennsylvania, makes the transition with flair. Truly celebrating the magical and expansive stylistic possibilities of being Indie, the Uptown Band is (in an exuberant way) all over the map."

- Jonathan Widran, AllMusic.com, Encino, CA

"Thanks for a terrific performance as the opening act for our sold out performance of comedian/ventriloquist Jeff Dunham at the Luhrs Center on Saturday night. Your act was a real crowd pleaser. I would recommend (and have recommended) the band to anyone looking for a fun and entertaining performance for their event."

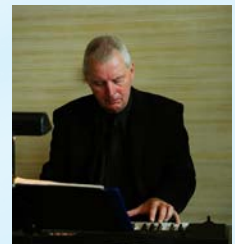
-Leslie Folmer Clinton, Director, H. Ric Luhrs Performing Arts Center, Shippensburg, PA

"The music industry needs more bands like this."

-Randy Mahon, The Urban Music Scene, Highland, CA

"The band's debut CD "Waiting for Her" is an accomplished collection that ably transports the band's undisputed live prowess to the recording studio."

-Denis Poole, Smooth Jazz Therapy, York, England



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