

# David Kimbell

*Talented music man dodges airport doldrums*

To many kids on Hilton Head Island, the middle-aged man in black wailing on a bass guitar in this summer's Anthem Rock Celebration is very familiar. He's David Kimbell, music teacher, orchestra conductor, pit musician, church musician and now, one of the seven-member Anthem band playing classic rock favorites from the last four decades.

Those who know Kimbell are hardly surprised by his latest gig. After all, he has led many musical lives, sometimes simultaneously. He began his musical odyssey at the age of five, taking piano lessons in a household with a heritage of important musicians. (His mother's family includes the Viennese composer Anton Bruckner; his older brother Michael is a noted composer on the West Coast.) Cello lessons followed, and later, he became assistant conductor of his high school orchestra.

During the 1960s Kimbell played bass guitar in a high school rock band. He later added classical guitar lessons and additional instruments to his repertoire. From 1975-81, Kimbell was based in Nashville, doing studio work and performing in orchestras when not on the road with the Truly Original Band. After four years in Dallas playing country-western music, he moved to Hilton Head Island in 1986 as a member of the Truly Dangerous Swamp Band.

Currently, Kimbell directs the Hilton Head High School Orchestra and Guitar Ensemble in classes that meet daily. He is a cellist with the Hilton Head Orchestra, assistant conductor and general manager for the Hilton Head Youth Orchestra and staff musician at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, where he also sings, plays strings and serves as substitute choir director.

Kimbell is a regular in the pit at the Arts Center of Coastal Carolina (formerly Self Family Arts Center) where he's been involved in over 40 productions. He also plays bass, cello and guitar for the Hallelujah Singers.

But Kimbell's most important musical endeavor, the one that has impacted the lives of many of our community's children, may well be his position as a private music teacher. Since 1986, Kimbell has taught over 300 students the basics and techniques of guitar, bass guitar, cello, violin, string bass, mandolin, and viola.

"I used to drive to students' homes for several years when I first started," he said with a smile. "But I literally drove myself crazy running from Rose Hill to Sea Pines."

Now, at any one time, Kimbell has 20 to 30 students taking private lessons in his studio in the island home he shares with wife Georgina, a fabric artist and crafts designer for WCSC-TV in Charleston.

David Kimbell, who takes music teaching seriously, has taken violin lessons from noted musician and conductor of the island's youth orchestra, Dorothy Mauney. "She taught me how to teach," he said.

Kimbell has written a large body of teaching materials and has gar-



PHOTO BY ROB KAUFMAN

*A man of many hats, and instruments, Kimbell strikes a popular chord with all.*

nered praise for his teaching style. Recent high school graduate Eric Cerrati became a guitar student of Kimbell when he enrolled in the orchestra class that met every day for a semester. "Mr. Kimbell said he'd teach me to play the bass, and I wanted to learn about classical music," explained Cerrati. "I knew Mr. Kimbell would make it fun." Cerrati wound up enrolling in the orchestra class a second time.

Kimbell's ability to take a diverse group of students with varying talents and turn them into an orchestra especially impressed Sam Urato, a former high school violinist who now performs with the University of Georgia symphony.

"He can make anything happen," said Urato. "He takes whatever talent he's given – and usually that's not very much – and makes it sound good. I think it's because he relates so well to the students. They want to perform well for him."

"I don't browbeat the kids in order to make myself look good," said Kimbell. "It's all about the kids." In fact, Kimbell always steps aside and applauds after his kids perform, to give them the stage and the credit.

While many island musicians have to work at something else for income, Kimbell is one of a handful of truly professional musicians on Hilton Head Island. "A lot of why I do so many different things is because I have to," said Kimbell. "Music is my job. I'm lucky I've never had to play with a top-40 band in an airport lounge.

"The creativity and variety make it interesting. Recently I played a symphony with the orchestra before heading into an Anthem rock rehearsal," he said.

Right now, through August 15, Kimbell will be playing and singing the high-energy songs of classic rock 'n roll. Come September, he'll pick up his baton without skipping a beat. – Karen Cerrati