



## Ken Burton

Born into, and brought up in a large West Indian Christian family (there were only ten of us), one thing was certain: lots of singing. We sang in the morning and the evening every day.

The sheer numbers, as well as the singing tradition we were coming from, meant that four part harmony, and even improvisation was a standard sound within the house; add to that more singing at school in daily assemblies and then church at the weekends, where I was accompanist for the 'senior' choir which specialised in anthems and hymns, and then accompanist for the youth choir (now gospel choir) which sang a variety of genres from anthems through to contemporary gospel, I had a healthy diet of singing.

Playing the voice parts for the various sections of the choir gave me an appreciation on how harmonies were put together. On top of all of this, my piano tutor discovered and developed musicianship. My education therefore came from many angles, and was education in the true meaning of the word, 'drawing/bringing out.

**Ken Burton**, BMus, read music at Goldsmiths College, University Of London, later doing an LTCL accredited course in voice education, learning from the likes of Janice Chapman, Dr Graham Welch, Colin Durrant, Thomas Hans and Jacob Lieberman (anatomy). His approach is to combine everything in one - voice education, music appreciation, and thinking about meaning, and intention behind every phrase.



*He is sensitive to musical colours and their ability to tell the story; does the phrase weep or laugh? Is the harmony question or answer? How does the music speak to different situations? In his work with BBC Songs of Praise, he is often responsible for arranging the same song for different times and different venues, and will often have a new perspective on the same song, making it relevant to time and place.*

*This indeed is the fluid nature of gospel music delivery: it speaks here and now. It addresses the moment, and those present in that moment. His gospel workshops often focus on meaning, and how to use different vocal colours, and personal life experiences and analogies to give more intention to the delivery. He emphasises the essential point that code (i.e. notes) are only to inform the musician of the starting point - the goal is not simply just to be able to sing and play correctly, but to connect - heart to heart.*