

Expression of Condolence for Phil Nimmons by Toronto City Council

Moved by: Mayor Olivia Chow

Seconded by: Deputy Mayor Amber Morley

The Mayor and Members of Toronto City Council are deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Phil Nimmons, Order of Canada, Order of Ontario – legendary Canadian musician, composer, arranger and educator – who passed away on April 5, 2024, at the age of 100.

Known as the “Dean of Canadian Jazz,” Phillip Rista Nimmons studied at the University of British Columbia, New York’s Juilliard School of Music, as well as the Royal Conservatory of Music.

Throughout much of the 20th century, Mr. Nimmons advanced jazz performance and composition, contributing to create a jazz sound and culture that was uniquely Canadian. In the 1950s he formed his influential group, Nimmons ‘N’ Nine, and later, Nimmons ‘N’ Nine Plus Six, which was frequently heard on Canadian Broadcast Company Radio and remained active for several decades. He cofounded the Canadian League of Composers in Toronto in 1951, which was a precursor to the Canadian Music Centre. In the 1960s, alongside Oscar Peterson and Ray Brown, Mr. Nimmons cofounded the Advanced School of Contemporary Music in Toronto, one of the first programs of its kind in Canada.

Mr. Nimmons was also a well-regarded educator, who established music programs at several post secondary institutions including Western University, the University of New Brunswick, the Banff Centre for Fine Arts, and the University of Toronto where he was honoured with the title “Director Emeritus of Jazz Studies”.

Throughout his life, Mr. Nimmons was a highly accomplished musician and composer who received many awards and honours. In 1977, he received the inaugural Juno Award for Best Jazz Album for *Atlantic Suite*. In 1984, he was the inaugural recipient of the Toronto Arts Award for Creative Excellence in Music. He was appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1993 and was awarded the Order of Ontario in 1994. He also received the Governor General’s Performing Arts Award for Lifetime Artistic Achievement in 2002 as well as the Queen’s Golden and Diamond Jubilee Medals in

2002 and 2012, respectively. In addition, he received a lifetime achievement award from Society of Composers, Authors, and Music Publishers of Canada (SOCAN), and was inducted into the International Association of Jazz Educators Hall of Fame.

With over 400 pieces of original music in jazz and classical, written for large and small groups, Television, and film, Mr. Nimmons leaves behind a legacy as a prolific composer and bandleader. He will be remembered as influential educator who nurtured the talent of future generations of Canadian musicians, and as someone who dedicated their entire life to music, jazz, and the arts in Canada. His contributions will live on through the many works he created, the programs he helped establish, and the Canadian Music Centre legacy fund that bears his name.

The City Clerk is requested to convey, on behalf of Members of Toronto City Council, our sincere sympathy and deepest condolences to Mr. Nimmons' children, Holly, Carey, and Spencer; his grandchildren, Sean, Justin, Melinda, Sasha, Phillip, and Colleen; their families; and the many other people whose lives he touched through his work.

June 26, 2024