

*Philip John Mattson*  
1938 - 2019



**March 3, 2019**  
**5:00 pm**  
**School For Music Vocations**  
**Creston, Iowa**



**OPEN NOW THY GATES OF BEAUTY**  
**SWCC Concert Choir & Alumni Guest Singers**  
**Arr. Phil Mattson | Rita Scholz, Conducting**

**WELCOME**  
**Janna Steed**

**DAVID MATTSON**

**THE 23RD PSALM**  
**Music by David Mattson**

**PAIGE PETER**

**I WISH YOU LOVE**  
**Michele Weir, Vocal | Zanuck Lindsey, Guitar**

**JOSHUA MATTSON**

**BODY AND SOUL**  
**SWCC "Harmonic Convergence"**  
**Arr. Phil Mattson | Jeremy Fox, Director**

**MEMORIES OF PHIL**

**JEANINE**  
**SWCC "Vocal Fusion"**  
**Arr. Phil Mattson | Lucas Mattson, Director**

**MARK HOFFMAN**

**YOU MUST BELIEVE IN SPRING**  
**John Knutson, Vocal | Michele Weir, Piano**

**MEMORIES OF PHIL**

**HERE'S TO LIFE**  
**SWCC "First Take"**  
**Arr. Phil Mattson | Jeremy Fox, Director**





**MEMORIES OF PHIL**

**HOW DO YOU KEEP THE MUSIC PLAYING?**  
Ellen Winters Reynolds, Vocal | Lucas Mattson, Piano

**MARK MATTSON**  
Video Tribute

**CLOSING REMARKS**  
Janna Steed

**I'LL BE SEEING YOU**  
SWCC Concert Choir & Alumni Guest Singers  
Arr. Phil Mattson

*Acknowledgements*

The Mattson family would like to thank Jeremy Fox and Southwestern Community College for their help with hosting this event.

A special thank you to all the SWCC vocal performers:

Anna Horn	Lawson Rolf	Annie Kemble
Brion Bowman	Luke Richardson	Chris McCutchan
Amanda Ross	Lawson Rolf	Charisma Carson
Kasey Domer	Milton Padilla	Sabel Jordison
Hannah Thompson	Kuniaki Mori	Harold Sundy
Lucas Mattson	Joshua Mattson	Jeremy Fox

Thanks to Ellen Winters Reynolds for assistance with the program and all the other friends and volunteers who helped to make this event possible.





Philip John Mattson, pianist, choral director, arranger, composer, and mentor to hundreds of musicians and teachers was born October 31, 1938 in Duluth, MN to John and Inez Mattson. As a boy, Phil attended church services regularly (although not always voluntarily). The hymns and their harmonies caught his ear and he was soon playing them on the church organ. This early exposure would later influence his arranging and conducting. He often credited his High School music teacher, Curt Hanson, with encouraging his pursuit of musical knowledge and integrity. Mr. Hanson famously gave young Phil the keys to the auditorium so that he could practice on his own time using the school piano. He graduated

from Brainerd High School in 1956 and joined the Navy, playing in the band. He married Joyce Neiman in 1958 and had sons Michael and Mark.

After their divorce in 1962, Phil married Margaret Nelson, with whom he had Philip Jr., Elizabeth, Joshua, Sarah (d. 2004), and Lucas Mattson. After working for several years as a piano salesman, Phil had an epiphany of sorts and decided to go back to school to pursue a teaching career. He earned his undergraduate degree summa cum laude from Concordia College, studying with the legendary Paul J. Christiansen. He did his graduate and doctoral work in Choral Literature and Conducting at the University of Iowa as an NDEA Fellow.

In 1975, the family moved to California where Phil became Director of Choral Activities at Foothill College and started his first vocal jazz group, “The Fanfairs.” At Foothill, he began a passionate, heartfelt journey and a long, illustrious career directing choirs and vocal jazz ensembles, achieving acclaim for his sophisticated arrangements and two Grammy nominations with his group “The PM Singers.” Phil’s arranging style inspired educational and professional groups alike and won him the respect of legendary arrangers like Clare Fischer, Gene Puerling, and Ward Swingle, whom he treasured counting amongst his friends. While teaching at Foothill, he started the Phil Mattson Workshops, offered during the summers on campuses throughout the US and Canada. These workshops uniquely paired students and educators together for a collaborative learning experience—and the evening concerts allowed everyone a chance to sing with Phil at the piano, firmly establishing his reputation as one of the finest vocal accompanists of his time. He served as choral director at Gonzaga University (Spokane, WA) before opening the Phil Mattson School in 1983, offering singers a complete musical education in performance, piano, theory, and studio work. Using that same approach, he established the School for Music Vocations at Southwestern Community College in Creston, IA in 1991, drawing students from around the country. In 2009, Phil relocated to Minneapolis, where he continued his work directing, arranging, performing, and recording as a jazz pianist. He was awarded the Jazz Education Lifetime Achievement Award in 2016.

Phil had a passion for travel and a requited love affair with Harley Davidson Motorcycles, his lifelong companion. He rode to the tip of South America, on the Autobahn, and many times across the USA. He set distance records in 2001/2002, averaging more than 1000 miles a day, stopping only for a good meal and a glass of merlot. Multiple serious accidents and, in later years, mobility issues could not dissuade him from continuing to ride. He was on his Harley on September 3, 2015, when he was struck and paralyzed. He survived many life-threatening infections and hospitalizations, going on to enjoy writing and playing again in Studio City, CA., living at Sunrise Senior Living and being cared for by his son Mark, who along with family and friends helped give Phil a few more happy and meaningful years of life. Phil’s unswerving commitment to the highest artistic standards sealed his stellar professional reputation, but it was his unquenchable optimism during difficult times which revealed his true character. Phil died peacefully in his sleep on January 9, 2019 of complications from paralysis. He is survived by his two former wives, his brother David Mattson, six of seven children, and fourteen grandchildren. He will also be missed and mourned by thousands of former students and colleagues. While his body succumbed to illness, Phil’s spirit remained indomitable and will live on through his music and in those he inspired.