

Eulogy 23rd June

Phil was born with music in his blood. He was born in Liverpool to musical parents Walter, a Salvation Army sergeant who played cornet in the Salvation Army, and Elsie who appreciated opera and classical music. He began to learn trumpet from his father aged 10 and went onto study music composition, conducting & Trumpet at the prestigious Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, which is where he first met his wife. Phil was a popular figure at the Royal Northern and often provided dance mix tapes for parties including his wife's 18th birthday at the student halls of residence. His wife admired Phil for his broad and extensive knowledge of music and his warm personality and they soon became friends.

After his studies at the Royal Northern, Phil moved to London to progress his career performing with many leading UK orchestras and the Royal Opera House. His wife also moved to London in 1982 to undertake a postgraduate orchestral performance course and, through a mutual friend, met Phil beginning a relationship with him that spanned 42 years.

Part of Phil's charm for his wife was his warm, open heart – which he often “wore on his sleeve”. He embraced his wife's family and would spend hours chatting to his wife's mother, a music critic, about music as his mother in law, like Phil, had an extensive knowledge of music. When his wife's sister, moved to London he naturally invited her to stay for with him for as long as she wanted, although Phil and his wife only had a very small flat and there was only a living room free – His wife's sister ended up staying for 6 months as part of his extended family. Thereafter Phil often shared his holidays, Christmas and Birthday celebrations with wife's sister and her husband, her brother and his family and his wife's parents and grandmother.

Many of the tributes that have poured through since Phil's death reflect his caring nature;

*“Phil has always been a wonderful friend and confidant to me” “his love of music could never be in question, there was no room for a compromise - but when it came to playing pranks - he was the master - yet a man of soul.”. **Maggie***

*Phil was a larger than life character, loved life and those around him, had an infectious and effervescent personality and would have given someone the shirt off his back!.” **Graeme***

*Phil was so talented, funny, charming - an incredible friend to me and my late dad.”
John*

*Phil led the charge ...untouchable musically...his wide ranging taste influenced us all. He introduced us to Mahler...earth wind and fire...you name it. Phil was ahead of the game. A huge influence on our lives. The gap will never be filled in.” **Peter***

He was such a lively and cheering character, with a wicked sense of humour. And what a musician! His knowledge was tremendous.!" Valerie

When their son was born, Phil's paternal qualities immediately came to the fore. His son was very precious to Phil - he spent hours with his "sunshine" boy and was fiercely protective of him. During his last few months, Phil's protective nature was increasingly evident as he sought to teach his wife all the things he used to do, so that she would be able to cope when he was no longer able to do these tasks. He endured everything that cancer threw at him with equanimity, fortitude, stoicism and humour. Incredibly he also sought to ease his wife and his son's pain of his anticipated death with his words of love, soliciting help from others to look after them and trying to make sure they didn't see him suffer. A voicemail sent to his wife from his hospital bed said "Hope you have a good rest – don't stress, try some relaxing"

Joyce Grenfell's poem, **If I should go (If I should die)**, describes well Phil's caring nature and how Phil wanted his wife and son to continue;

If I should die before the rest of you,
break not a flower nor inscribe a stone,
nor, when I'm gone, speak in a Sunday voice,
but be the usual selves that I have known.
Weep if you must: parting is hell.
But life goes on.
So sing as well.

Here are some of the other messages of condolences

*Phil was one of the larger than life characters we meet only a few times in our life. I am sure lots of friends will write with their memories of him. For me he has been a friend since early teenage years. Certainly a prominent figure in MYO history! Phil's gregarious nature meant he naturally gathered friends around him and we will never forget his legacy – so many pupils and concerts to remember. We will never forget the generous welcome which you both provided to our family on our short visit to chateau charly – our girls (now 22!) were talking just this morning about it being their favourite holiday memory **SANDRA***

My memory of Phil goes back to my 1st year in Anfield Comp. Phil , a few years older, but in Anfield Comp, he may as well have been an adult. You didn't talk to senior years! That all changed when we entered the music rooms, up on D floor. Him and Gary J on trumpets, Phil T on piano Mark Levy and Keith P on violins. Me on flute with Peter H and Eric McK. So many more people whose names I've long forgotten... Here's the thing...Phil would have remembered every single one, AND the instrument they played... we were all equal then. "Lads making music together. Every morning we were in school, in D1 or D 2 playing, chatting...I was "surname" and,he was Lawrence...NO one called you by your first name! We became mates, and this grew through the years in liverpool Schools Symphony

Orchestra, then Merseyside Youth Orchestra and eventually The RNCM... by then, we called each other by our first names...well, he called me bladder as I couldn't hold my drink! And WHAT drinking and partying we did over those formative years! Phil was there. He is part of my DNA. YOUR DNA. My history in my teenage years is the same as Keith's, Steve's, Conrad, Jukes Ali ...so many. Phil led the charge ...untouchable musically...his wide ranging taste influenced us all. He introduced us to Mahler...earth wind and fire...you name it. Phil was ahead of the game. A huge influence on our lives. This gap will never be filled in." **Peter**

I've always cherished the special connection that I had with Phil, and I have so many warm memories of you both. **Jonno.**

So so sad to hear this news. He was my teacher and friend too and genuinely a lovely guy who had no airs and graces you got what you saw. He loved his music and that spread through all that knew him. RIP Phil you will be missed. Thanks for all you did for me xx **Joan**

Such a huge loss of such a lovely, inspiring man. Phil was my teacher and my friend in the MYO and the RNCM. I have wonderful memories of Phil and playing again together at last year's MYO Reunion. **Jane**


Incredibly sad news, Lou. Phil was a wonderful musician, composer, instrumentalist, teacher and mentor to many. Condolences tohis family and friends, in particular, Louise & Morris who visited him recently before his passing.Rest in eternal peace **Allen**

Phil aimed high, dreamed big and lived large. A huge talent and great personality who will be deeply missed. Condolences to... sic his family ...and all who loved him. RIP Phil. Xx **Christine**

That's very sad to see ... Phil was very much a 'what you see is what you get' kind of a bloke and you always knew where you stood with him. **Ian**

I hold a special place in my heart for him and have such fond memories of time spent with him and making music with him in the past. My thoughts and prayers and my heart goes out to you . I will raise a glass to him tonight and say a prayer for you all. xxxx **Kate**

We are so sorry to hear that Phil has passed away. Such a lovely man, so talented and gregarious and such a raconteur. We have such lovely memories of times spent with Phil through the years, as you know he played the trumpet voluntary as we walked down the aisle at our wedding in 1984, and was such good fun at the reception later. And more recently you made us so welcome when we all came to the xxxxx with Phil's Uncle ... to see in the New Year with you all, he was such great company as always. And whenever we met up back in England he entertained us with his funny stories, always completely without filter and hilarious..... **Peter & Karen**

*Phil was one-in-a-million. He loved life, loved his friends and loved you both dearly. His heart was overflowing with generosity and kindness. His warmth seeped into the hearts of those he touched and will remain there forever. Phil made us all better people, taught us how to live life to its fullest. We'll miss him deeply. With all our love and  support, **Pam and Pierre.***

*I'm devastated by how sudden it is, and Sandrine joins me in sending our sincere condolences Many of us are losing a friend today. Personally, I mourn the loss of a man with a deep heart, a very affectionate man who loved to share with others. Beneath his easygoing demeanor, endowed with a caustic—and even astounding—humor, and despite my difficulty understanding everything, I sensed and greatly appreciated the rigorous, cultured musician and composer, the sensitive, creative artist, with a subtle and vibrant spirit. I am happy that Providence allowed me to meet such a man; seeing Phil on Wednesdays or any other day was always a joyous pleasure. We are now without him, but he will remain in my heart. From now on, he enchants the souls of all those who are already with the Creator. Sandrine and I fully share your grief, and we pray that he brings courage, protection, and kindness to ... and you. We send you affectionate love, **Philippe***

*Very saddened to hear of the passing of Phil Lawrence, a generous host, lovely friend, excellent musician and fabulous arranger/composer. ...an arrangement he did of Liszt's piano masterpiece Liebestraum for tenor and orchestraAs the lyrics say "now time's gone by and all my thoughts are with you..." **Dominic***

*I am so sorry that you have lost Phil in such a sad and shocking way. I had a wonderful picture in my head of you and Phil and the dogs at the chateau living the dream and I know how much you both loved it, and I know how much hard work it must have been also!. and of course Phil will always be there with you in your heart. **Sue***

*I've been thinking of all the lovely times I've spent with you all. Laughing at the memories of how funny he was, especially at the parties. He introduced me to the film *The Red Shoes* and how I sobbed watching it with him on the sofa and I still sob everytime I watch now. He just made me laugh so much and I will cherish all those good times in my heart forever. Xx **Hayley***

Phil has always been a wonderful friend and confidant to me and would always tell it to me straight. He also was an amazing musical inspirer and supporter. I will always be so grateful to him. So yesterday and today, I've sung some of his music in my music room and tonight poured a gin and tonic - not as strong as Phil's - but in his honour. In "Perchance to Dream" there are words that he wrote about Jim, but when I sang them last night some of them reminded me of the composer. I don't mean to upset you. But " his love of music could never be in question, there was no room for

a compromise - but when it came to playing pranks - he was the master - yet a man of soul." **Maggie**

Many of us had known Phil for very many years and although we may not have seen him as often as one would have liked, he always seemed to be a 'constant' in our lives. There didn't seem to be a time when people weren't exchanging stories, and many there were/are. One sure thing, they always brought a smile to our faces! Phil was a larger than life character, loved life and those around him, had an infectious and effervescent personality and would have given someone the shirt off his back! I have only good memories of him and will miss him dearly." **Graeme**

Phil was so talented, funny, charming - an incredible friend to me and my late dad, ... who also loved him dearly. There are so many memories to cherish." **John**

I am very sad to know that I will not see him again. He was such a lively and cheering character, with a wicked sense of humour. And what a musician! His knowledge was tremendous. And he had such a love of Mahler!" **Valerie**