

## CONCERTS

# Victoria Jazz Orchestra honours heart of music scene

Music of Ross Taggart performed April 15

Known as the heart of Vancouver's vibrant jazz scene, saxophonist and pianist Ross Taggart left a national legacy of impressive musical contributions, along with an unmatched sense of humour.

On Sunday, April 15, Victoria Jazz Orchestra and special guest conductor Jill Townsend and guitarist Bill Coon will pay tribute to that legacy on ArtSpring's stage. The show starts at 2:30 p.m. with a

bar at intermission.

According to the Victoria Jazz Orchestra, Taggart was born and raised in Victoria, and was active at a high level as a jazz saxophonist and pianist on Canada's West Coast from the time he was a teenager.

A consummate mainstream jazz player who was equally formidable on both of his instruments, Taggart accompanied such legendary players as Benny Golson, Dr. Lonnie Smith, Phil Woods, Clark Terry and Fraser MacPherson. He taught at Capilano Uni-

versity and was married to pianist Sharon Minemoto.

ArtSpring marketing manager Jessica Beck observes the Globe and Mail summed up the musician's influence in a 2013 article, which stated, "It was a standing joke on Hot Air — the CBC's long-running jazz program — that any show featuring Canadian jazz would have Vancouver-based musician Ross Taggart involved in some way."

"After losing his battle with kidney cancer in 2013, two of Taggart's closest friends, bandleader

and composer Jill Townsend and her husband, guitarist Bill Coon, took it upon themselves to pay a musical homage to him by orchestrating a number of his compositions for a large jazz ensemble," Beck explained. "The product of their endeavour became the album Legacy featuring many of Vancouver's finest jazz musicians, and of course Ross Taggart's wonderful compositions."

Both Townsend and Coon will join the Victoria Jazz Orchestra for the ArtSpring show. The concert is directed by jazz saxophonist and

composer Monik Nordine. Her impressive 30-year musical career has included playing with the talents of Rob McConnell, Hugh Fraser and VEJL, Guido Basso, Michael Buble and the Victoria Symphony Orchestra, among others. She also created the Salt Spring Island Jazz Festival as well as the music series Jazz at the Acme in Nanaimo.

The ArtSpring raffle winner of a four-day culture-filled trip to Vancouver will be revealed at intermission. Raffle tickets are available at the ArtSpring box office until April 14.