Phil Ramone — Rest In Peace — Videos

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Catch A Fire – Phil Ramone

Billy Joel: Inducts Phil Ramone into Songwriters Hall of Fame 2010

Billy Joel – Just the way you are
Legends – Phil Ramone

Phil Ramone “Music Production Long Version” (Web 72)

Sitting With Phil Ramone Jan 2011 Interview

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Phil Ramone talks about 10cc's influence on Just the Way You Are
Who is Phil Ramone?

Phil Ramone Biography

The Salvation Army Phil Ramone Orchestra for Children
A former violin prodigy and expert engineer, he worked with Dylan, Sinatra, McCartney, Bennett, Charles, Streisand, Simon, Joel and Bacharach and spent more than 50 years in the business.

Phil Ramone, the instinctive music producer whose mixing mastery for Frank Sinatra, Barbra Streisand, Bob Dylan, Ray Charles, Paul Simon and Billy Joel helped fashion some of the most sumptuous and top-selling albums of his era, has died. He was 72.

The 14-time Grammy winner and 33-time nominee once dubbed "The Pope of Pop" was hospitalized in late February with an aortic aneurysm in New York and died Saturday morning at New York Presbyterian Hospital, according to Ramone's son Matt.

A native of South Africa who at age 10 performed as a violinist for Queen Elizabeth II, Ramone spent years working as a songwriter, engineer and acoustics expert in New York before charting a path that would make him a trusted studio partner in the eyes (and ears) of the industry's biggest stars.

Among the albums on which he worked were Streisand's 1967 live A Happening in Central Park, Paul & Linda McCartney's Ram (1971), sandwiched between the Beatles and Wings eras; Dylan's aching Blood on the Tracks (1975); Simon's pop classic Still Crazy After All These Years (1975); Joe's critical and commercial breakthrough The Stranger (1977); Sinatra's last-gasp Duets (1993), a model of technical wizardry; and Charles' final album, the mega-selling Genius Loves Company (2004).

Ramone served as a songwriter in New York's famed Brill Building music factory and worked early on with Quincy Jones, Tom Dowd, Creed Taylor, Jerry Leiber & Mike Stoller and Burt Bacharach & Hal David, among others. In 1959, he launched the A&R Recording studios on Seventh Avenue in New York, where Blood on the Tracks and so many other classics were recorded.

Asked to describe his philosophy as a producer, Ramone told Sound on Sound magazine in 2005: "I served a long time as an engineer and watched many famous producers work, and I decided on the personality that came most easily to me, which is the more relaxed; to give artists encouragement when needed.

"Players are like prodigies, thoroughbreds," he added. "You have to handle them with care."

Born on Jan. 5, 1941, Ramone at age 3 began studying the piano and violin, and he attended the Juilliard School in New York as a teenager. Although he was an accomplished performer and composer, he was attracted to the technical side of music and became a wizard working with the dials.

PHOTOS: Hollywood's Notable Deaths of 2013

In 1964, Ramone engineered the classic bossa nova album Getz/Gilberto, from American saxophonist Stan Getz and Brazilian guitarist João Gilberto. It would become one of the biggest-selling jazz albums of all time and earn him his first Grammy, for best engineered recording. It also won the album of the year Grammy.

Later in the decade, he worked with folk superstars Peter, Paul and Mary, then won another Grammy in 1969 as co-producer of the original Broadway cast album of Promises, Promises, with music and lyrics by Bacharach and David.

Ramone's career reached another level in 1975 when he produced Simon's Still Crazy After All These Years — which featured the No. 1 single "50 Ways to Leave Your Lover" and won Ramone a Grammy for album of the year — and Blood on the Tracks.

About the Dylan album, Ramone said: "It turned out to be the best four days of what Bob Dylan does, which is he wanders from song to song, sometimes coming back to the first one. Other than changing the roll of tape, you just had to let it all happen."

In 1977, he produced Kenny Loggins' Celebrate Me Home, Phoebe Snow's Never Letting Go and Joel's The Stranger, which kicked off a seven-album, decade-long relationship with the Long Island-raised singer-songwriter. He and Joel were "both lunatics," he once said.

PHOTOS: Note Perfect: The 15 Best Portrayals of Musicians in Movies
For the screeching tires on "Movin' Out (Anthony's Song)" from The Stranger, Ramone recorded bassist Doug Stegmeyer's Corvette peeling out, taping a microphone to the tailpipe. He also added a bit of echo to Joel's whistling throughout the album.

"There's nothing like the challenge of devising and reproducing an effect you're looking for," Ramone wrote in his 2007 book, Making Records: The Scenes Behind the Music. "Sometimes that chase is more exciting than the catch."

Ramone won the record of the year Grammy for Joel's "Just the Way You Are" from the album (after removing a "cha-cha-cha" background from the song), captured album of the year for the follow-up 52nd Street and was named producer of the year in 1980 after guiding the rock-infused Glass Houses, which featured Joel's first chart-topping single, "It's Still Rock and Roll to Me."

On Oct. 1, 1982, 52nd Street became the first commercially released compact disc, and Ramone later received a Technical Grammy for his lifetime of innovative contributions to the industry.

In 1993, Ramone produced Duets, a comeback album for Sinatra. The legendary singer never sang in the same studio with his duet partners, who included Streisand, Natalie Cole, Aretha Franklin, Tony Bennett, Bono and Kenny G. Ramone used an EDNet fiber-optic system to record the artists in different locations in real time.

The first of two Sinatra Duets albums sold more than 3 million copies in the U.S. and made it to No. 2 on the Billboard albums chart.

STORY: Why Music Biopics Are a Nightmare to Make

For Genius Loves Company, Ramone and fellow producer John Burk provided a clean, retro setting for the pop classics sung by Charles with James Taylor, Bonnie Raitt, Elton John, Norah Jones and others. The album, recorded over a period of nine months and released in August 2004 — two months after Charles’ death — earned triple-platinum status, made it to No. 1 and raked in eight Grammys.

"If Ray is looking upon us now, he's just made his career last another 50 years," Ramone said as he accepted the Grammy for Album of the Year.

Ramone also produced Bennett's Duets II, the 2011 release famous for the crooner's collaboration with Amy Winehouse. With that album, Bennett became the oldest living artist to debut at No. 1 on the Billboard 200.

Other Ramone-produced albums include Lesley Gore's I'll Cry If I Want To (1963), Julian Lennon's debut Valotte (1984), the Broadway cast album for Passion (1994), Liza Minnelli's live Liza's Back (2002), Rod Stewart's It Had to Be You: The Great American Songbook (2002) and recent works from George Michael, Dionne Warwick and Glee star Matthew Morrison.

Ramone recorded Streisand and Kris Kristofferson live during filming for A Star Is Born (1976) and co-wrote "Imagination," sung by Laura Branigan in Flashdance (1983), good for another Grammy. He also contributed to the films Midnight Cowboy (1969), Ghostbusters (1984) and Beyond the Sea (2004), with Kevin Spacey acting and singing as Bobby Darin.

Ramone also recorded Marilyn Monroe's boozy rendition of "Happy Birthday to You" sung to President John F. Kennedy in 1962 and received an Emmy in 1973 for his work as an audio designer on the NBC special Liza With a Z.

In a Recording Academy statement confirming his passing, the Grammy organization also credited Ramone as "a pioneer of audio technological developments — creating new innovations for the compact disc and surround sound technologies."

In an interview with Music Radar in November, Ramone credited his ability to seize upon spontaneity as one reason he became such a prolific hitmaker.

"You have to be able to run as fast as the artist, capture the magic early on," he said. "After a few takes, people start intellectualizing what they're doing, and it loses something. What's special happens right away — so you have to be ready for it."

In addition to his son Matt, Ramone is survived by wife Karen and sons BJ and Simon.

Phil Ramone, Famed Record Producer of Paul Simon, Billy Joel, Tony Bennett, Dies

Exclusive UPDATE: Billy Joel says:

“I always thought of Phil Ramone as the most talented guy in my band. He was the guy that no one ever ever saw onstage. He was with me as long as any of the musicians I ever played with – longer than most. So much of my music was shaped by him and brought to fruition by him.

I have lost a dear friend – and my greatest mentor. The music world lost a giant today.”

Earlier: Heartbreaking: my friend, the friend of so many in the music business, has died at age 72. Phil had been in a New York hospital for the last few weeks, recovering from an aortic aneurysm. It’s just tragic. Phil produced the great music by Paul Simon, Billy Joel, and Tony Bennett – all of whom had been keeping in touch with Phil’s family constantly over the last few weeks.

Phil had 14 Grammy awards – and not enough frankly. Just in the last two years he’d produced Tony Bennett’s “Duets II” and “Viva Duets,” as well as Paul Simon’s critically acclaimed “So Beautiful, So What” and was finishing up a new album with George Michael.

To say Phil was a musical genius, a gentleman, the sweetest and nicest guy – it’s all not enough. For years he’s been producing the annual Songwriters Hall of Fame show and it’s been such a great experience. This past winter, right before he became ill, Phil was honored by the Salvation Army for all of work in the last few years. He was so proud of organizing their kids’ orchestra. He was beaming when they played at the Marriott Marquis that night. And he was so thrilled that Aretha Franklin came to honor him as well.

All I can think of this afternoon is Phil in the studio recording the “Duets II” album in the summer of 2011. I came into see him, and it he was drenched in sweat. It was at least 100 degrees outside, and Aretha had asked that the air conditioning be turned off while she and Tony Bennett recorded “How Do You Keep the Music Playing.” Phil was wearing a light blue dress shirt, and all of it was wet by degrees. I said, “Phil are you all right?” He looked at me with that big smile. “Do ya see what’s going on in there?” he pointed to Aretha and Tony on other side of the glass. “I’m great. Hot. But great.”

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Phil’s Grammys:

- 2006 Producer, Best Traditional Pop Vocal Album, Tony Bennett Duets: An American Classic
- 2005 Producer, Best Traditional Pop Vocal Album, Tony Bennett The Art of Romance
- 2004 Producer, Album of the Year, Ray Charles Genius Loves Company
- 2004 Producer, Best Surround Sound Album, Ray Charles Genius Loves Company
- 2004 Technical Grammy, for contributions of outstanding technical significance to the recording field.
- 2002 Producer – Best Traditional Pop Vocal Album Playin’ With My Friends: Bennett Sings The Blues
- 1994 Producer – Best Musical Show Album, Passion
- 1983 Composer – Best Instrumental Composition Written for a Motion Picture or for Television Flashdance
- 1980 Producer of the Year – Non-Classical
- 1979 Producer, Album of the Year, 52nd Street
- 1978 Producer, Record of the Year, Just The Way You Are
- 1975 Producer, Album of the Year, Still Crazy After All These Years
- 1969 Producer, Best Musical Show Album, Promises, Promises
- 1964 Engineer, Best Engineered Recording (non-classical) Getz/Gilberto

Phil Ramone

Philip “Phil” Ramone (January 5, 1941 – March 30, 2013) was an American recording engineer, record producer, violinist, and composer, who, in 1958, co-founded A & R Recording, Inc., a recording studio at 112 West 48th Street, New York — above what then was Manny’s Music. The success of that studio grew into several studios and a record producing company. He was described by Billboard as “legendary”,[3] and the BBC as a “CD pioneer”.[3]

Early life

Ramone was born in South Africa and grew up in Brooklyn. As a child in South Africa, Ramone was a musical prodigy, beginning to play the violin at
age three and performing for Elizabeth II at age ten.[4] In the late 1940s he trained as a classical violinist at The Juilliard School, where one of his classmates was Phil Woods. Ramone opened his own recording studio before he was 20.[5] He became a naturalized citizen of the U.S.A. on December 14, 1953.[6]

Professional career
A & R Recording

In 1959, Ramone established an independent recording studio A & R Recording (the initials were derived from the last initials of Ramone and his then-business partner Jack Arnold). Later the partnership consisted of Brooks Arthur owning half and Ramone, Don Frey, and Arthur Downs Ward (1922–2002) owning the other half.[7]

In the studio he quickly gained a reputation as a sound engineer and music producer, in particular for his use of innovative technology. Among those whose music he has produced are Clay Aiken, Burt Bacharach, The Band, Bono, Laura Branigan, Ray Charles, Karen Carpenter, Chicago, Peter Cincotti, Natalie Cole, Bob Dylan, Sheena Easton, Melissa Errico, Gloria Estefan, Aretha Franklin, Billy Joel, Elton John, Quincy Jones, Patricia Kaas, B. B. King, Julian Lennon, Shelby Lynne, Madonna, Barry Manilow, Richard Marx, Paul McCartney, George Michael, Liza Minnelli, Anne Murray, Olivia Newton-John, Sinéad O'Connor, Fito Páez, Luciano Pavarotti, Peter Paul, and Mary, Andre Previn, Diane Schuur, Carly Simon, Paul Simon, Frank Sinatra, Rod Stewart, James Taylor, The Guess Who, Dionne Warwick and Stevie Wonder. He is also credited with recording Marilyn Monroe's intoxicated version of “Happy Birthday to You” to President John F. Kennedy.[1]

His early work in producing and engineering was with jazz artists, working on John Coltrane records and acting as engineer for the landmark Getz/Gilberto album in 1964, for which he won his first Grammy. He transitioned during the 1960s to working with folk-rock, pop-rock, and R&B acts such as Peter, Paul, and Mary, James Taylor, Aretha Franklin, and Bob Dylan, first primarily as an engineer, and later as a producer. He won his first production Grammy for his work on 1975's Still Crazy After All These Years by Paul Simon. His breakthrough album became Billy Joel's 1977 album The Stranger and began a fruitful collaboration that would lead to Ramone producing a string of hit Joel albums throughout the rest of the 1970s and 1980s. In 1993, he produced Duets, Frank Sinatra's comeback album, a commercial hit that peaked at #2 on the Billboard Album Chart. During the rest of the 1990s, Ramone moved from production work to his primary role as an industry executive, serving as chairman of The Recording Academy, though he would still be involved in some studio work including several Broadway cast recordings, as well as helping produce, with Quincy Jones, the televised A Tribute to Brian Wilson in 2001.[8]

Technical innovations

October 1, 2012, marked the thirtieth anniversary of the world's first commercially marketed compact disc. On that date in 1982, A & R Recording released a digital compact disc version of Billy Joel's 52nd Street in Japan, alongside Sony's CD player CDP-101.[9]

Ramone introduced optical surround sound for movies.[10] His book, Making Records: The Scenes Behind the Music, written with Chuck Granata, was released on October 9, 2007. Also in October 2007, Ramone produced a limited engagement performance of Richard Vetere's Be My Love: The Mario Lanza Story.[11] The play was directed by Charles Messina and co-produced by Sonny Grosso. It premiered at The Tilles Center in Greenvale, New York[12]

Other professional activities


Most recent work

On July 8, 2008, Columbia records released The Stranger 30th Anniversary, which features interviews with Ramone. This box set includes a remastered version of the 1977 Billy Joel album, The Stranger by Ramone.[14] The
following summer, Ramone produced *Gershwin Across America*, a tribute album to the music of George and Ira Gershwin. The album features Jewel, Jason Mraz, Darius Rucker, and Paul Simon among others.[15] In 2011, Ramone worked with George Michael, during his 2011 Symphonica Tour.[1]

**Personal life**

Ramone was married to Karen Ichiuji-Ramone, with whom he had three sons.[10]

**Death**

Ramone died on March 30, 2013, in a Manhattan hospital after being admitted for surgery.[16][17] His family did not immediately release details. [5]

**Awards**

Ramone was nominated for 33 Grammy awards, winning 14 including a Technical Grammy Award in 2005 for a lifetime of innovative contributions to the recording industry.[18][19]

- 1965 – Best Engineered Recording (non classical), for *Getz/Gilberto*
- 1970 – Best Musical Show Album for producing *Promises, Promises*
- 1976 – Album of the Year for producing *Still Crazy After All These Years*
- 1979 – Record of the Year for producing “Just the Way You Are”
- 1980 – Album of the Year for producing *52nd Street*
- 1981 – Producer of the Year (non classical)
- 1984 – Best Album Of Original Score Written For A Motion Picture Or A Television Special, for *Flashdance*
- 1995 – Best Musical Show Album for producing *Passion*
- 2003 – Best Traditional Pop Vocal Album, for producing “Playin’ With My Friends: Bennett Sings The Blues”
- 2005 – Album of the Year and Best Surround Sound Album for producing *Genius Loves Company*
- 2006 – Best Traditional Pop Vocal Album for producing *The Art of Romance*
- 2007 – Best Traditional Pop Vocal Album for producing *Duets: An American Classic*
- 2012 – Best Traditional Pop Vocal Album for producing *Duets II*

He also won an Emmy Award in 1973 as sound mixer for “Duke Ellington…We Love You Madly”, a tribute to Duke Ellington broadcast on CBS.[3]

Ramone was awarded honorary degrees by Five Towns College, Berklee College of Music, and Skidmore College. He was a member of Berklee’s Board of Trustees. He was also awarded a Fellowship by the Audio Engineering Society in 2007.[20]

**References**

6. ▲ US District Court for the Southern District of New York, Petition No. 625266, Admission No. 7198731


