

# Gilbert Johnson

*Gilbert Johnson died Sunday, September 8 of kidney cancer at the age of 74. Johnson was the solo trumpet of the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy from 1958-1975, a two-time Grammy Award winner, and Professor of Trumpet at the University of Miami from 1975 to the present. His contributions to music are vast through his performance and teaching legacy. His former students hold positions in numerous major orchestras, faculty at leading universities, and composers. His recordings of solo literature and symphonic repertoire are still legendary today for their high level of musicianship, tone quality, and style while maintaining the trumpet's position as a member of the orchestra and solo instrument. Significant solo recordings include Handel's Messiah with the Philadelphia Orchestra/Mormon Tabernacle Choir, Haydn's Concerto for Trumpet, Risaager's Concertino, both with the Philadelphia Orchestra, and Hindemith's Sonata for Trumpet with Glenn Gould. Also, he recorded over 800 pieces as solo trumpet of the Philadelphia Orchestra.*

*Because of his distinguished musical ability, Johnson was regarded as "a major figure in the trumpet world," said William Hipp, dean of the University of Miami School of Music. "He was the greatest trumpet player I ever heard in a symphony orchestra," said Henry Smith, a former principal trombonist who played with Johnson in the Philadelphia Orchestra. "He played with an incredible warmth and lyricism, and that for me just set him above everybody else." Johnson and Smith, who also played together in the Philadelphia Brass Ensemble, was part of the group that won a 1969 Grammy Award for Best Classical Music Record -- The Antiphonal Music of Gabrieli -- performed with the Philadelphia, Cleveland and Chicago brass ensembles.*

*Johnson received a Bachelor's degree from the Hartt School of Music at the University of Hartford with advanced studies at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, studying trumpet with Sigmund Hering and Samuel Krauss. He appeared as a soloist with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo and also served as principal trumpet of the New Orleans Philharmonic.*

*Johnson's teaching career at the University of Miami began in 1975, when he came to South Florida after almost 20 years in the Philadelphia Orchestra.*

*"The fact that the Philadelphia Orchestra was the first orchestra to play a 52-week season helped me make up my mind to move [to Miami]," he said during a 1979 interview. Another reason he gave for the move: the fishing. Johnson enjoyed both fly-fishing and bone-fishing. When he first moved to South Florida, Johnson played solo trumpet with the Florida Philharmonic.*

*Johnson is survived by his twin daughters Sharon Johnson and Susan Tarbe; sisters Eleanor Hamm and Constance Youndt; and six grandchildren. His wife of 41 years, Myra, died in 1998.*

*For a complete story on his career, please see the Journal of the International Trumpet Guild, May 1999.*