

# Passings: Emeritus of Music W. Niel Sir

## A gifted composer and passionate educator is remembered

Friday, April 14, 2023



The University of New Hampshire honors the life and legacy of W. Niel Sir, associate professor emeritus of music, who passed away on August 28, 2022.

Sir's academic journey began at the University of Chicago, where he earned his B.A. at the age of 19. He furthered his studies at the University of California, Berkeley, and in Paris with Max Deutsch, Arnold Schoenberg's colleague and friend. Sir's interests were broad, extending beyond music to include French literature and support for the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and local galleries.

As a mentor, Sir's dedication to music education was evident in



PROFESSOR W. NIEL SIR IN 1985  
(JUDITH PFAFF).

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the success of his students. Many of his students at the University of New Hampshire went on to study with prominent composers. Sir's pedagogy was so effective that it was detailed in "A Conversation with Max Deutsch," which appeared in Perspectives of New Music in 1972. Sir's passion for music and his unwavering commitment to his craft shone through in his exceptional compositions, including the String Quartet, "Night Episode," and Quintet.

After retiring, Sir continued to compose in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, leaving an indelible mark on the world of music. His legacy as a composer, teacher and mentor will continue to inspire and enrich the lives of future generations. We are grateful for Sir's enormous impact on the world of music and the countless lives he touched along the way.

WRITTEN [Corey Kurylo '23](#) | Arts Student Intern

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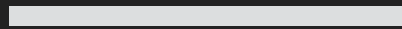
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