

Nancy Walker Biography

Pianist and composer Nancy Walker has been recognized with honours Canada-wide, including the Montréal Jazz Festival's Grand Prix de Jazz, the National Jazz Awards Keyboardist Of The Year Award, a JUNO nomination for Instrumental Album Of The Year, and an induction into the Mississauga Music Walk Of Fame. A dynamic improviser, an artful composer and a responsive accompanist, Nancy has been praised both for her work as a solo artist and as a musical collaborator. As a side player she can be heard on a wide range of jazz recordings, by artists from saxophonist Kirk MacDonald to vocalist Emilie-Claire Barlow. More recently she can be heard on the 2024 recording *Here's To Life* by John Neudorf (on which she was both pianist and co-producer), and Sarah Jerrom's 2025 JUNO-nominated *Magpie*.

Nancy's musical scope extends beyond the jazz genre. As a composer of contemporary choral music, she was commissioned to compose the music for a full-length musical theatre production (SATB chorus and soloists) in collaboration with The Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, entitled *FIRST*. The musical premiered at the New Credit Community Centre in June, 2018, and in 2020-21 the production received The Ontario Historical Society's Indigenous History Award. Later, the Mississauga Children's Choir commissioned Nancy to adapt one of the songs from *FIRST* (*Water*, with lyrics by Steven Campbell) for their senior children's choir. It was performed in May, 2024 at the final concert of the choir's 2023/24 season. Earlier in her career Nancy worked extensively as a side musician with many artists outside the jazz idiom, including Raffi, Sylvia Tyson, Roger Whittaker and The Parachute Club.

Nancy has several discs to her credit as leader; her most recent is *Deeper Down*, featuring eight of her original compositions, reflecting her love of nature, her pull toward the cinematic, and her view of the age we live in.

Nancy has taught on the music faculties of Humber College and York University, and she herself holds a Master of Arts in Music (Composition) from York University.

"Nancy Walker has played enough piano to know how to keep listeners interested however hard she pushes the boundaries of familiarity." Geoff Chapman, Toronto Star

"Harmonically she's influenced by the usual suspects—Evans, Hancock, Jarrett, etc.—but her delicate touch and denser harmonic constructs brings to mind British pianist John Taylor as well...Walker's music is easy on the ears, but don't mistake that for lacking in interest or challenge, because she masks an advanced harmonic concept within an accessible veneer." John Kelman, All About Jazz

"A fine example of the modern jazz musician's art." Mark Miller, The Globe and Mail