

William Mayer

Whether writing for orchestra, voice or piano it is William Mayer's lyric vein that is most often singled out. Of an all Mayer concert John Rockwell of the *New York Times* wrote, "Mayer's work sings out with real beauty." And at his recent 80th birthday concert Mimi Stern-Wolfe also spoke of "his tremendous love of lyricism and the simple poignancy that is so apparent in his choral writing, his opera, and his orchestral and instrumental works as well." *AmeriGrove* pointed out a different aspect. "Mayer's style, it reported, "is characterized by a contrasting of transparent textures with humorous, highly rhythmic and densely scored passages."

Mayer's many awards and honors include NEA grants, Guggenheim and MacDowell fellowships and award from the National Institute of MusicTheater for having written the outstanding musical theater work of 1983 (*A DEATH IN THE FAMILY*). He has also received grants from the Ford Foundation, the American Music Society and a number of State Arts' Councils. He is the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award in Music from the Center for Contemporary Opera.

"I have had the good fortune, writes Mayer, "of seeing virtually all my scores brought to life by exceptional performers, ranging from Leopold Stokowski, Gerald Schwarz, Dawn Upshaw and Heidi Grant Murphy to Eleanor Roosevelt (who narrated my Hello, World!!), Sahan Arzruni, my son Steven Mayer and the ever innovative Downtown Music Productions, which has given definitive performances of so many of my works."

William Mayer is presently writing works for Andre Emelianoff, Robert deCormier and Mimi Stern-Wolfe's "Honoring Langston Hughes" program of February 17, 2008. The latter work will be a setting of Langston Hughes' "Dream Variations" and "A Negro Speaks of Rivers."

Bio courtesy of www.downtownmusicproductions.org