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Soprano Dawn Upshaw Named a MacArthur Fellow

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – Soprano Dawn Upshaw, a four-time Grammy-award winner and a 1982 graduate of Illinois Wesleyan University has been named today (Sept. 25), by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, one of 24 MacArthur Fellows for 2007. Upshaw, along with the other Fellows, will receive a \$500,000 in “no strings attached” funding over the next five years for support of their current activities or to take their work in new directions.

Since its inception in 1981, the Foundation has named 756 Fellows, including this year’s honorees, who range from 18 to 82 years of age.

“The MacArthur Foundation supports highly creative individuals and institutions with the ability and the promise to make a difference in shaping and improving our future,” said MacArthur President Jonathan Fanton. “These new MacArthur Fellows, extraordinary men and women of all ages and in many fields, honor and inspire us with their talent, their courage, and their deep commitment. With the gift of time and unfettered opportunity to create and explore, we are confident that the Fellows will follow their hearts and their minds wherever they lead, making new discoveries and making a difference in the world.”

The Fellows, selected for their creativity, originality and potential to make important contributions in the future, include a forensic anthropologist, spider silk biologist, short story writer, inventor, biomedical scientist, nanotechnologist, public health physician, choreographer, as well as Upshaw.

Upshaw, who appeared in concert with the Illinois Wesleyan University Civic Orchestra in October of 2006, is a world-renowned opera singer, who is known “to stretch the boundaries of operatic and concert singing and enriching the landscape of contemporary music,” according to the MacArthur Foundation. The recipient of several Grammy, Gramophone, and Edison Prize recordings, she came to international attention in 1993 with her recording of “Symphony No. 3” by Henryk Gorecki. Upshaw has drawn acclaim for the range of her vocal technique and her

diverse repertoire, which extends from the canonical works of Bach and Mozart to the modern works of Stravinsky and Poulenc; from new music by contemporary talents such as John Harbison and Kaija Saariaho to popular American songs.

She is known to have an eclectic style of performance and teaching that passionately embraces contemporary music and sets an example to other aspiring singers.

Upshaw received a Bachelor of Arts degree in music from IWU, and studied voice with her late father-in-law David Nott, an Illinois Wesleyan professor emeritus of voice and former director of choral activity. She also studied under Ellen Faull at the Manhattan School of Music, earning a master's degree in 1984. She also attended courses given by Jan DeGaetani at the Aspen (Colo.) Music School. Upshaw won the Young Concert Artists auditions in 1984 and the Walter M. Naumburg Competition in 1985, and was a member of the Metropolitan Opera Young Artists Development Program. She is a member of the vocal studies faculty at the Tanglewood Music Center and was named the Charles Franklin Kellogg and Grace E. Ramsey Kellogg Professor of the Arts at Bard College in 2005.

Born in Tennessee and raised in Park Forest, Ill., Upshaw lives near New York City with her husband, Michael Nott, a 1979 Illinois Wesleyan graduate and their two children.