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April 24, 2000

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## **\$38,000 Guggenheim Grant Awarded to IWU Music Professor**

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--A \$38,000 fellowship from the New York City-based John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation has been awarded to David Vayo, professor of music at Illinois Wesleyan University.

Vayo will use the fellowship to support writing a composition for a chamber orchestra. He expects that he will work on the piece during the spring and summer of 2001, while on leave from the university.

"The piece," said Vayo, whose music has been performed over 200 times around the world, "is untitled and a twinkle in my eye."

In 2000 the foundation awarded 182 U.S. and Canadian Fellowships valued at \$6.34 million. Vayo was among 2,927 applicants for Guggenheim fellowships.

Vayo speculated that he was awarded the fellowship because the foundation was looking for composers who had an individual identity. Other factors that may have played a role in the fellowship awards, Vayo said, might be how well composers know the instruments they are writing for as well as "the uniqueness and eloquence of their voice."

Since the foundation ran a full-page advertisement in the April 9 New York Times announcing the fellowship winners in various disciplines, Vayo has been receiving congratulatory phone calls and e-mails from family, friends, and colleagues around the country.

"I'm dumbfounded and happy," Vayo said about receiving the fellowship, quipping: "I danced around the house."

Vayo, who previously had applied for a Guggenheim fellowship a dozen times without success, characterized the award as a "pretty big feather in my cap," which he hopes will "open some doors" and "help generate more opportunities."

Vayo's composing talent also has been recognized for 12 consecutive years by the New York-based American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP).

The world premiere of Vayo's composition Signals took place in Amsterdam on April 7, 1999. The popular Dutch ensemble, Orkest de Volharding (Perseverance Orchestra) debuted the work. Vayo received a \$15,000 commission to write Signals from the Sergei Koussevitzky Music Foundations, based in New York City and the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. Signals is a 12-minute piece with instrumentation including a flute, three trumpets, three saxophones, three trombones, a French horn, piano, and electric bass.

Among Vayo's other compositions are Symphony: Blossoms and Awakenings; Five Small Packages for string quartet; Study in Carmine and Coral for the piano; Poem, a chamber music piece for flute, violin, clarinet, cello, and piano, and Wings, a piano and cello piece paying homage to Vayo's interests in Brazilian pop music and jazz.

Vayo joined the IWU faculty as an assistant professor of composition and theory in 1991, after teaching at Connecticut College, the National University of Costa Rica, and the National Symphony Youth Program of Costa Rica.

A native of New Haven, Conn., Vayo earned bachelor's and master's degrees in music composition at Indiana University. He was awarded the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts in Composition in 1990 from the University of Michigan.

The John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation was established in 1925 by U.S. Sen. Simon Guggenheim (1867-1941), who represented Colorado on Capitol Hill from 1907-13, and his wife as a memorial to a son who died in 1922. The foundation awards fellowships to citizens and permanent residents of the United States, Canada, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

"The foundation," according to its web site, "offers fellowships to further the development of scholars and artists by assisting them to engage in research in any field of knowledge and creation in any of the arts, under the freest possible conditions and irrespective of race, color, or creed."

"The Fellowships are awarded to men and women," the foundation said, "who have already demonstrated exceptional creative ability in the arts."

The foundation consults with distinguished scholars and artists regarding the accomplishments and promise of the applicants and presents this evidence to the Committee of Selection."

IWU, founded in 1850, enrolls about 2,070 students in a College of Liberal Arts, and individual schools of Music, Theatre Arts, Art, and Nursing. Since 1994, these facilities have been added to the IWU campus: a \$15 million athletics and recreation center, a \$25 million science center, a \$6.8 million residence hall, a \$5.1 million Center for Liberal Arts, and a \$1.65 million baseball stadium. A \$26 million library and a \$6 million student center are under construction. Kiplinger's Personal Finance Magazine ranks Illinois Wesleyan University 12th among the nation's top 1,600 private colleges in providing a top-quality education at an affordable cost. Also sharing IWU's rank are Princeton and Dartmouth.