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David Vayo Named to Endowed Professorship

April 25, 2012

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – On Tuesday, April 24, Illinois Wesleyan University President Richard F. Wilson announced the appointment of Professor of Composition and Theory David Vayo to the Fern Rosetta Sherff Professorship in Music. The investiture ceremony will take place at the University's Commencement ceremony on Sunday, April 29.

David Vayo

In making the announcement, President Wilson said, "the Committee on Endowed Professorships and Chairs met this spring to review applicants for the vacant position, most recently held by Larry Campbell and previously by R. Bedford Watkins. I am grateful to the Committee for its diligent work."

"Considering the tremendous respect I have for my IWU colleagues who hold endowed professorships, as well as for the previous holders of this position in particular, it's not only a delight but also a profound honor to be selected," Vayo said. "It's a shot in the arm encouraging me to take my work to the next level."



The Fern Rosetta Sherff professorship was established in 1977 to honor the extraordinary generosity of the Sherff family. Mrs. Sherff was a benefactress of the University, concert singer and pianist. Illinois Wesleyan's former Sherff Hall of Science, now occupied by the Center for Liberal Arts (CLA), was named for her husband, Earl Edward Sherff.

In his announcement, President Wilson said, "As a faculty member since 1991, Dr. Vayo has compiled an impressive record as professor of composition and theory, head of the composition department and coordinator of new music activities. As a teacher, he stresses active student participation in writing effective music, offering insights into new ideas, concepts and musical styles students might not encounter otherwise."

Vayo has been celebrated with awards and commissions from foundations such as the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, the St. Louis Symphony Society and the Koussevitzky Music Foundations in the Library of Congress, among many others. He has received ASCAPPlus awards from the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) for 21 years in a row.

A prolific composer, Vayo has had over four hundred performances and broadcasts of his compositions take place around the world, including Mexico, Hong Kong, the Netherlands, Germany and France. Nationally, his work has been performed at the University of Wisconsin, Ohio State University and the California Institute of the Arts.

Teaching courses on composition, improvisation and contemporary music, Vayo holds a doctor of musical arts degree in composition from the University of Michigan and master's and bachelor's degrees in music from Indiana University. In his time at IWU, he has overseen two major revisions of the curriculum for the bachelor of music degree in composition. Vayo has served the University in a number of capacities – as chair of the Faculty Development Committee, the John Wesley Powell Student Research Conference Committee and the Latin American Studies Team, as well as being a member of the Academic Appeals Board.

Before joining the Illinois Wesleyan faculty in 1991, Vayo taught at Connecticut College and the National University of Costa Rica. As Coordinator of New Music Activities at IWU, he directs the annual Symposium of Contemporary Music, the New Music Café concert series and other events in the School of Music's New Music Series. Recent projects include *Enlightenment* for Mexico City's ONIX ensemble, *Color Garden* for Yang Wei, a virtuoso of the pipa (a Chinese plucked instrument), and *Mackinaw Ekphrasis*, a collaboration with photographer Kenneth Kashian.

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