

William Henry Curry

Conductor

William Henry Curry is the Resident Conductor and Summerfest Artistic Director of the North Carolina Symphony Orchestra, and the music director of the Durham Symphony. He came to the North Carolina by way of New Orleans, where he served as Resident Conductor of the New Orleans Symphony.

Maestro Curry has conducted over forty orchestras, including appearances with the Chicago, Cleveland, Houston, National, Detroit, Denver, American, and San Diego symphonies, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic. He made his debut in Israel with the Israel Camerata Jerusalem orchestra, and has conducted orchestras in Bangkok and Taiwan. Guest appearances include the Indianapolis, Detroit, and New Jersey orchestras. The Maestro made his debut as a conductor of ballet in December 2002 with the New York City Ballet in their famed Balanchine production of *The Nutcracker*.

A native of Pittsburgh, Curry started conducting and composing music at age 14. His first major appointment was at age 21, when he was named Assistant Conductor of the Richmond Chamber Orchestra. On the same day, he was called in to replace a conductor who suddenly became ill, for a performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Maestro Curry's unexpected debut was hailed by the critics and audience alike. He went on to serve as Resident Conductor with the Baltimore Symphony (1978-1983) and with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra (1983-1985), and Associate Conductor of the Indianapolis Symphony (1983-88). In 1988 Maestro Curry was named winner of the Leopold Stokowski Conducting Competition and performed in Carnegie Hall. He was featured conductor for the tour and recording of Anthony Davis's Grammy-nominated opera *X*, and has conducted productions with the New York City Opera, Houston Grand Opera and Chicago Opera Theatre.

Maestro Curry is also a composer, and his works have been played by many of America's finest orchestras. On June 13, 1999, the Indianapolis Symphony premiered his *Eulogy for a Dream*. Based on the speeches and writings of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the work was a tremendous success: it received a standing ovation and was broadcast nationally in January 2000 on the National Public Radio program *Performance Today*. In one of his last public appearances, the late William Warfield of *Showboat* and *Porgy and Bess* fame narrated the North Carolina premiere to enthusiastic audience and critical acclaim. *Classical Voice North Carolina* praised the work's "emotional intensity" and "majestic climax," and said that it "promises to become a January staple for orchestras around the country."

Maestro Curry, through his teacher Richard Lert, can trace his conductorial lineage back to



Artist Management

Arthur Nikisch, one of the most important conductors of the 19th century. As a result, he is devoted to the research and recreation of the performance practice styles of the Romantic Age. He is also committed to new music and has conducted premières by, among others, Schwantner, Bolcom, Foss and Hailstork. The range of artists Maestro Curry has worked with in his career run the gamut from Zubin Mehta and Aaron Copland to John Williams and Ella Fitzgerald. He has been a beacon for promising young musicians both as an instructor at the Peabody Conservatory and at the Baltimore School for the Arts, and as a mentor.