

EVELYN SIMPSON CURENTON BIOGRAPHY

Evelyn Simpson Curenton earned many titles including composer, arranger, pianist, organist, vocalist, artistic director, lecturer, producer, and clinician. Her versatile skills make her one of the most sought after musicians in the area. Her talents have led her around the globe with performances in China, France, England, Italy, Austria, and a European tour with Bernice Reagon Johnson, founding member of Sweet Honey in the Rock.

A native of Philadelphia, she began playing the piano at the age of two and began her studies at the age of five. By the time she was nine, she was accompanying her renowned musical family, The Singing Simpsons of Philadelphia, in public performances. She graduated from Temple University where she earned a Bachelor's Degree in Music Education and Voice and was recently honored with an award and recognition for her distinguished career and contributions in the field of music.

Ms. Curenton has worked with some of the music industry's best. She was commissioned to do arrangements for the Carnegie Hall concert featuring Kathleen Battle, Jessye Norman and the Chorus and Orchestra of New York's acclaimed Metropolitan Opera. Several orchestras and ensembles have performed her works such as the Philadelphia Orchestra, The National Symphony, The Baltimore Symphony, The Minnesota Orchestra, and The U.S. Marine Band. Distinguished musicians like the late Duke Ellington, George Shirley, her late sister and Naumberg winner Joy Simpson, Hubert Laws, Denyce Graves, John Blake, Angela Brown of the Metropolitan Opera, Janice Chandler-Eteme, and David Murray have also performed her works. Her music can be found on several recordings, including her own. "Reflections" is her most recent studio recording.

Ms. Curenton contributed several of her hymn arrangements to the acclaimed "African American Heritage Hymnal," with songs ranging from pre-Civil War music to contemporary music. She can be heard regularly at the Third Street Church of God or Shiloh Baptist Church in Washington, DC.

Notable Reviews

"The rich, unusually moody arrangement by Evelyn Simpson-Curenton, played with considerable sensitivity by the orchestra, added to the effectiveness of the performance, which Hall shaped eloquently." ***The Baltimore Sun***

"For example, the rendition that I find most compelling is Jessye Norman's solo in Evelyn Simpson-Curenton's arrangement of "Sinner, Please Don't Let This ..." ***American Music***, Volume 13, Number 2

"James Levine conducted a 70-voice black chorus originally formed for the Metropolitan Opera production of "Porgy and Bess" and a 42-piece orchestra consisting chiefly of members of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic, with additional contributions from Hubert Laws, flutist; Nancy Allen, harpist; Sylvia Olden Lee, pianist, and Evelyn Simpson-Curenton, organist. Many of the arrangements and orchestrations were done specifically for this concert, several by Ms. Simpson-Curenton." ***The New York Times***

Recent Notable Performances

Over the years, Evelyn Simpson Curenton has had several memorable performances with famous soloists, orchestras and ensembles. Most recently, Kathleen Battle performed two of her arrangements with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and Morgan State Choir. She performed with and accompanied her sister, Marietta Simpson, renowned mezzo-soprano opera singer, at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Their performance, part of the weeklong "Joyful Sounds: Gospel Across America" celebration, included jazz, classical and gospel fusion arrangements. Also during the celebration, the National Symphony Orchestra performed her arrangement of "Holy, Holy, Holy." The Show Choir of the Duke Ellington Performing Arts School performed her soul-stirring arrangement of Earth, Wind and Fire's "In the Stone" during the Earth, Wind and Fire Concert at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The choir also performed her arrangement of "O Come All Ye Faithful" for President Obama and his

family at the 2010 National Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony in Washington, DC. In summer 2011, Evelyn Simpson Curenton completed a five-city tour of France with the Show Choir that performed her arrangements of "Get on Board" and "In the Stone" by Earth, Wind and Fire.