

Willard White

Willard White was born in Kingston, Jamaica on October 10, 1946. Although his parents were not especially musical, they were very supportive of his career, even when it took him away from his birthplace.

Acclaimed as "one of the world's great bass singers," White first trained at the Jamaican School of Music and continued at The Julliard School in New York. He debuted in the New York City Opera in 1974 (age 27) playing Colline in *La Bohème*. Since then he has performed in great opera houses throughout Europe and America, including Amsterdam and San Francisco, Paris (the Bastille and the Chatalet), London (both the Royal Opera, Covent Garden and English National Opera), Munich, Berlin, Geneva, Hamburg, Madrid, Los Angeles, Brussels and at the Glyndebourne, Aix en Provence and Salzburg Festivals. White is also known for his natural and honest quality of acting, which was especially noted in his performance of Porgy in *Porgy and Bess* at Glyndebourne in 1986 and the TV film recording made in 1993 (lipsynched in the film recording studio to the Glyndebourne audio recording).

White's performance repertoire spans a very wide range, including work by Bartok, Monteverdi, Handel, Mozart, Rossini, Verdi, Puccini, Wagner, Debussy, Shostakovich, Mussorgsky, Prokofiev and Gershwin!

Now 58 years old, White continues to perform. His 2004/2005 performance schedule (according to IMGArtist.com) includes:

Wotan in Das Rheingold conducted by Sir Simon Rattle at the BBC Proms and in Baden-Baden, Fotis in The Greek Passion for the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, and in Brno, Nekrotzar in Le Grand Macabre for San Francisco Opera, Mephistopheles in La Damnation de Faust conducted by Charles Dutoit with the Atalanta Symphony and New York Philharmonic Orchestras, On the Town for English National Opera, Tchélio in The Love for Three Oranges for the Netherlands Opera and many concerts and recitals.

Willard White has said that he believes growing up in Jamaica had a very strong impact on the way he thinks today, despite the fact that he no longer lives there. He now lives in London and is the father of seven children. White has a very strong spiritual life and has been quoted as saying, "I believe in God but not a conventional God. I believe in a wonderful force around our lives, in our lives, in the midst of lives and in the midst of our bodies." He received knighthood in 2004 from the queen in her birthday honors list.

Sources:

Jamaica's Classical Musicians:

<http://www.joyousjam.com/jamaicasclassicalmusicians/id3.html>

100 Great Black Britons:

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IMGArtists.com

<http://www.imgartists.com/?page=artist&id=144&c=2>

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