

THE SPECTATOR

Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia
Site of the first theatrical production in North America -- 1605

Longfellow on Longfellow

Ernest J. Dick

Corporate Archivist (Retired)

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

The 20 of us at King's Theatre last Thursday night truly were privileged to hear Layne Longfellow on Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. He is not a direct descendant of the poet, nor is he a historian or a scholar of literature. But Dr. Layne Longfellow is a psychologist, does have a family connection, and he brought passion and a profound understanding of the 19th century literary giant to King's Theatre stage. His research into the times and context of the poet informs his personal determination to bring Henry Wadsworth Longfellow alive for audiences today.

Layne Longfellow delighted us with his insights and his readings of selections from the best-known and the rarely-heard of Longfellow's poems. He adapted Longfellow's language ever so slightly, smoothing out the 19th century anachronisms so that, as he put it, "we would hear the



Photo Credit King's Theatre

Layne Longfellow, Poetry Ambassador, Friends of the Longfellow National Historic Site, Cambridge, Massachusetts, reads the poems of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow at King's Theatre, Thursdays.

poems the way the poet intended them". Some of the readings were accompanied by musical compositions by Michael Hoppe, which worked wonderfully. He even made the link from Longfellow to the Canadian poet Leonard Cohen, but this you will have to go hear for yourself.

Hopefully then, next Thursday, everyone who professes an interest in poetry; everyone with a curiosity about the 19th century; and everyone who appreciates intimate and authentic performance will be in attendance for the final installment of "Longfellow on Longfellow."
