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Fascinating Rhythms: Celebrating the Music of George Gershwin

Beth Cram Porter
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FASCINATING RHYTHMS

CELEBRATING THE MUSIC OF GEORGE GERSHWIN

7 P.M. FRIDAY, MARCH 19, 2010
JEREMIAH CHAPEL
CEDARVILLE UNIVERSITY
FASCINATING RHYTHMS: CELEBRATING THE MUSIC OF GEORGE GERSHWIN

Beth Cram Porter, soprano
Janelle Criner, mezzo-soprano
Mark Spencer, baritone
Jun Kim, violin
Chuck Clevenger, piano
The Masterworks Chorus and Orchestra
Peter Stafford Wilson, conductor

All works by George Gershwin (1898–1937)

Cuban Overture
Fascinatin' Rhythm
Let's Call the Whole Thing Off
Embraceable You
Love Walked In
Somebody Loves Me
The Man I Love

Brief Pause

Lullaby

PORGY AND BESS Concert Version Medley.............................. arr. Robert Russell Bennett
Summertime
A Woman Is a Sometime Thing
Gone, Gone, Gone
Overflow
My Man's Gone Now
Oh, the Train
Oh, I Got Plenty O' Nuttin
Bess, You Is My Woman Now
Oh, I Can't Sit Down
There's a Boat Dat's Leavin' Soon for New York
L cwd, I'm on My Way

Brief Pause

Rhapsody in Blue

No flash photography. Please turn off all cell phones and pagers.
In nearly all of the compositions by George Gershwin (1898–1937) the distinctiveness of America vibrates, whether it be the urban cacophony of a bustling New York City, the Afro-Cuban rhythms of one of America's then-favorite Caribbean vacation spots, the unique Gullah dialect of African-Americans in South Carolina, or the ragtime and jazz-inspired popular tunes that proliferated under his pen.

Gershwin grew up in Manhattan as the son of Jewish-Russian immigrants. His parents provided a piano and record player for his growing interest in music. After his sophomore year in high school, Gershwin quit to pursue his musical career. His brother, Ira, however, continued his education into college where he majored in English at City College of New York. He was lured into George's world of music and eventually left college to pursue his love of English as a lyricist. By the mid-1920s George and Ira had become a famous songwriting team.

Early in his elementary school years, Gershwin had been attracted to the nineteenth-century classical music he heard on player pianos in store windows, recordings from the Birns Brothers Phonograph store below his apartment, and live performances in his neighborhood. As soon as the family brought an upright piano home, Gershwin astonished his parents by his ability to play by ear an array of popular tunes he had internalized from his environment. Afterward he formally studied piano from 1910–1918, spending the last five years of that time with Charles Hambitzer, whom he cites as his greatest musical influence. From these lessons, Gershwin learned the styles of Liszt, Chopin, and Debussy. He later furthered his music studies with Edward Kilenyi, an immigrant Hungarian composer-theorist. Kilenyi, who had worked on an English translation of Schoenberg's Harmonielehre, introduced him to that composer's language and style. Gershwin ended his formal studies with Rubin Goldmark, a prominent composer who became the head of Juilliard's theory and composition department when it was established in 1924.

Cuban Overture premiered August 16, 1932 at an outdoor summer concert at Lewisohn Stadium on the campus of the City University of New York. It was part of an all-Gershwin concert, drawing an audience of 17,000. It was the first time ever the New York Philharmonic had devoted an entire evening to a contemporary, living composer. His inspiration for Cuban Overture came from a trip to Havana in February of that year. There he became immersed in the rhythms of the rumba played on maracas, conga drums, bongos, guiros, and what Gershwin himself referred to as “Cuban sticks” (claves). Performances in this style by Xavier Cugat particularly inspired him to use these rhythms and instruments in a composition. In fact, the original title of the work was Rumba, but he changed it to the current title to reflect the classical form that provided the structure. The work has the fast-slow-fast form of the Italian overture and includes such Western conventions as canon, cadenza, and polytonality. For the premiere, however, the Cuban rather than the classical roots were showcased by placing the Cuban instruments in front of the conductor's stand.

“Fascinatin' Rhythm,” originally titled “Syncopated City,” is a song from the Gershwin brothers' first successful musical comedy Lady, Be Good! The work premiered in Philadelphia on November 17, 1924 and then on Broadway on December 1 of that year. This production included Fred Astaire, who is credited with a large share of the successful run of 330 performances. The music abounds with the complex polyrhythms and blue notes characteristic of jazz. The lyrics reflect the close collaboration of the Gershwins. George and Ira had reportedly argued for days over what would become the double rhyme in the chorus, “quiver” and “flivver.” (“Flivver” was a common term for an old jalopy in the 1920's.) The song has since become a trademark of Gershwin's jazz-influenced style.

“Let's Call the Whole Thing Off” comes from the 1937 film Shall We Dance starring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. The work is another collaboration of George and Ira, who completed the score in late 1936. Ira reportedly refers to an elementary school lesson on the various pronunciations of “neither” as the inspiration for the lyrics. The title refers to a falsely rumored marriage between the
two lead characters. As they escape the press to relax by roller-skating in Central Park, the two make plans to marry and then divorce the next day in order to put the gossip to rest. By the end of the film, not surprisingly, they truly fall in love. This song, one of the most popular from the film, later made the "Lucky Strike Hit Parade."

"Embraceable You" was originally written for a musical that never materialized, East Is West. It was based on a 1918 play of the same name, with a theme similar to Madame Butterfly. Like many Gershwin songs, however, "Embraceable You" found new life in another production, Girl Crazy, a successful George-Ira collaboration that premiered first in Philadelphia on September 29, 1930 and then two weeks later at the Alvin Theatre in New York on October 14. This production included the debut of twenty-one year old Ethel Merman who brought down the house on opening night.

"Love Walked In" was first conceived for a film by Samuel Goldwyn, The Goldwyn Follies. Unfortunately George died before the production was completed, leaving Ira to finish the work. "Somebody Loves Me" began life in the Scandals of 1924, a Gershwin Broadway revue, his last of this medley-type production before turning to musical theatre. This song became the one remaining hit of the show. It has since been performed by great singers such as Bing Crosby, Kiri Te Kanawa, and Lena Horne. "The Man I Love" might have been inspired by a set of piano preludes Gershwin prepared for his study with Goldmark. It began as a song in Lady, Be Good! but was dropped from the show, later resurfacing in Strike Up the Band of 1927 and Rosalie of 1928. In spite of its migrant nature, it became one of the most enduringly popular Gershwin songs, a favorite of both Billie Holiday and Barbra Streisand.

Lullaby of 1919 was a string quartet movement Gershwin wrote while studying with Kilenyi, but did not receive its first public performance in that instrumentation until October 29, 1967 when it was performed at the Library of Congress by the Juilliard String Quartet. Since that time it has been performed numerous times in a variety of arrangements. As an early work by Gershwin, it shows his absorption of the Western classical idioms as well as the syncopated rhythms of ragtime. It has an overall ABA form with several tuneful themes that foreshadow his larger concert works to come.

Porgy and Bess, one of Gershwin's late works as well as one of his greatest efforts in the large-scale vocal-dramatic genre, premiered first in Boston at the Colonial Theater on September 30, 1935, followed by its New York premiere at the Alvin Theatre on October 10, 1935. It has been acclaimed as not only Gershwin's greatest achievement but as the best American opera to date. It was praised for its portrayal of the American character and spirit, for the correct and intelligent portrayal of the Gullah dialect of Charleston African-Americans, for the mutual enhancement of the music and the drama, and for the freshness it brought to the operatic stage. Based on the novel, Porgy, by DuBose Heyward, Gershwin realized his dream of writing a truly American opera. He spent time in Charleston, South Carolina and on nearby Folly Island in order to absorb the language and culture of the African-Americans living there. He reproduced the Gullah dialect in the lyrics, even capturing the sound of a Holy Rollers Church meeting in the storm scene, where he set six different prayers sung simultaneously. He portrayed the Gullah culture in the wailing gestures of "Gone, Gone, Gone." The cry of the Strawberry Woman also has been documented as authentic. To distinguish his opera from the novel and from the play Porgy, written by DuBose's wife Dorothy, Gershwin decided to call his work Porgy and Bess after the operatic traditions of works such as Tristan und Isolde, Dido and Aeneas, and Orfeo ed Euridice. A number of Gershwin's most memorable songs found their beginnings in this opera. Among them are "Summertime," "Bess, You Is My Woman Now," "It Ain't Necessarily So," and "Oh, I Got Plenty O' Nuttin."

The first production ran for 124 performances, in spite of the Great Depression. The top price for tickets, however, was $4.40, later falling to $3.30. Gershwin originally had considered the Metropolitan Opera for his new work, but he was afraid that there would not be a way to obtain the all-black cast he required for the work. The original Porgy was Todd Duncan (Gershwin had originally wanted Paul Robeson, but he wasn't available), a professor at Howard University. After the Broadway run, the company toured five cities, including Duncan's home of Washington D.C.
Unfortunately, Washington's National Theater was segregated; however, after many letters and petitions, approval for a one-time integration was granted so that Duncan's and other cast members' families and friends could attend the performance.

*Rhapsody in Blue* for piano and jazz band premiered on February 12, 1924 at Aeolian Hall in New York, with Gershwin at the piano. It resulted from a collaboration with Paul Whiteman's jazz band and Whiteman's arranger, Ferde Grofé. Whiteman and his jazz band/orchestra had been gaining fame in New York for his incorporation of classical orchestral instruments such as the cello into his jazz band. As Gershwin became an admirer of his performances, the two men discussed a mutual interest in combining classical and popular elements. Indeed, Whiteman's concert at Aeolian Hall was billed as "An Experiment in New Music." Although the dates of the score's composition remain in question, a finished short score by Gershwin is dated January 7, 1924, about a month before the premiere. Grofé orchestrated the music for Whiteman's band sometime between that date and the premiere. Our performance tonight uses Grofé's arrangement for jazz orchestra.


—Dr. Sandra Yang, Assistant Professor of Music History

### Conductor and Soloists

**PETER STAFFORD WILSON, Guest Conductor**

Now in his eighth season as Music Director of Ohio's Springfield Symphony Orchestra (SSO), Peter Stafford Wilson is one of the most exciting and talked about conductors of his generation. Concurrently, he holds the post of Music Director of the Westerville Symphony. Mr. Wilson's current season also includes his debut with the Tulsa Ballet, conducting holiday performances of Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker*.

Peter Stafford Wilson's leadership of the SSO continues to elicit praise from the public, musicians, and press. Its 2005 *Agriculture and the Arts Growing Together* brought international attention to the organization, as did its sequel, *American Made: Celebrating Our Manufacturing Heritage*, premiered in November 2007. The SSO's innovative series "Night Lights" has enjoyed steadily increasing sales and attendance. The recent endowment of the music director chair with gifts totaling one million dollars is further testimony to the community's support.

From 1990 to 2009, Peter Stafford Wilson held the posts of Assistant and Associate Conductor of The Columbus Symphony Orchestra. In Columbus, his duties included the leadership of the orchestra's nationally recognized educational projects, which have been featured at national conferences of the American Symphony Orchestra League and Music Educators National Conference. He led programs on all of the orchestra's classical and pops subscription series and played a major role in its 1997 Viva Vienna Festival. Subsequently, he was named Artistic Director of the orchestra's *Festival Weeks @ The Southern*, for which his innovative programming was consistently praised. Mr. Wilson is also Music Director of the Columbus Symphony Youth Orchestra (CSYO), which he has regularly led in local and regional concerts. The CSYO has performed at the national conferences of the ASOL and MENC and at the 1998 International Youth Orchestra Festival in Banff, Alberta. In the summer of 1999, he and the CSYO toured Austria, the Czech Republic, and Germany, where they maintain an exchange relationship with the Heinrich Schütz Konservatorium in Dresden. During the summer of 2005, Mr. Wilson led the CSYO on a highly acclaimed tour of The People's Republic of China, playing to capacity audiences in Beijing, Hefei, Hong Kong, and Shanghai, as well as in an historic performance atop the Great Wall of China.
In addition to his myriad activities with the SSO, Peter Stafford Wilson's current season includes his continuing duties as Music Director of the Westerville Symphony, a community/collegiate orchestra based at Otterbein College. He also led a performance of Mendelssohn's *Elijah* at Cedarville University.

A native of North Carolina, Peter Stafford Wilson studied at the University of Cincinnati's College-Conservatory of Music (CCM), where his primary mentor was the late Thomas Schippers. During his years at CCM, he became a leading exponent of contemporary music, often collaborating with faculty and student composers, including the Conservatory's Visiting Professor of Composition, Lukas Foss. Mr. Wilson also studied at the Aspen Music School, where he studied with Dennis Russell Davies, Eastern Music Festival (on whose faculty he subsequently served), Pierre Monteux School, Boris Goldovsky Summer Opera Institute, and Rome's Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, where he was associated with Franco Ferrara. After his advanced studies, he was appointed Assistant, and later Associate, Conductor of the Canton Symphony Orchestra. The Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra appointed him Regional Pops Conductor for the 1995 summer season, during which he led the orchestra in a series of widely acclaimed performances in Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky. Mr. Wilson also enjoyed a multi-year artistic relationship with The Cleveland Orchestra, often serving as cover conductor for Severance Hall and Blossom Music Center events. In 1996, the American Symphony Orchestra League featured him in its Conductor Preview event, a program that encourages emerging conducting talents in the United States.

Peter Stafford Wilson has guest conducted the orchestras of Bozeman, Charlotte, Chautauqua, Dallas, Detroit, Erie, Indianapolis, Kansas City, Louisville, North Carolina, Phoenix, Roanoke, Seattle, Syracuse, Tucson, Tulsa, West Virginia, Wheeling, and Youngstown. He also led the Independence Day Concert with Peter Nero's Philly Pops Orchestra and the Northeastern Pennsylvania Philharmonic's highly popular "Awesome Classics" series, as well as programs with Orquesta Filarmonica de Montevideo and Hong Kong Sinfonietta. No stranger to the lyric theatre, Mr. Wilson has held the positions of Principal Conductor of South Carolina's Opera Charleston and Music Director of the Ohio Light Opera and conducted performances at Spoleto Festival USA, Young Artists Opera Theater, College Light Opera, Canton Lyric Opera and Otterbein College Opera Theatre. He also enjoys an on-going association with BalletMet in Columbus.

Peter Stafford Wilson and his wife, Barbara Karam Wilson, reside in Westerville, Ohio. When not conducting, he enjoys traveling, golf, and reading. He is an avid gourmet cook.

**BETH CRAM PORTER, Soprano**

Beth Cram Porter has earned a splendid reputation as soloist and recitalist. She toured France with Maestro Robert Shaw, performing as soloist in Bach's *B Minor Mass* and Brahms' *Liebeslieder Waltzes*. At the Oregon Bach Festival, she sang in the North American Premiere of Mendelssohn's opera *Der Onkle Aus Boston* with Maestro Helmuth Rilling and was the soprano soloist for the 2007 production of Arthur Honneger's *King David*. In 2004, she was invited to be the featured soloist at the White House National Day of Prayer ceremony where she sang for President George W. Bush and 200 of his invited guests. She recently sang the soprano solos in Handel's *Messiah* with the Austin Symphony in Austin, Texas. On faculty at Cedarville University since 1997, Porter is currently Associate Professor of Voice and serves as Chair of the Department of Music, Art, and Worship.

**JANELLE CRINER, Mezzo-Soprano**

Mezzo-soprano Janelle Criner serves as adjunct professor of voice at Cedarville University. Ms. Criner has been featured in performances with the Columbus Symphony, the Heisey Wind Ensemble, and the Brevard Music Center Orchestra in such works as Vivaldi's *Gloria*, Saint Saens...
Christmas Oratorio, Vivaldi's Magnificat, and Handel's Messiah. Her opera and operetta repertoire includes the roles of Tisbe in La Cenerentola, Amastris in Orfeo Ed Euridice, Buttercup in HMS Pinafore, Baroness in Candide and Ruth in the Pirates of Penzance. She is a graduate of Cedarville University (B.M.) where she studied with Mark Spencer and Beth Porter, and The Ohio State University (M.M.) where she studied with Robin Rice. Janelle brings with her over four years of private studio teaching experience and is an active artist with Opera Columbus.

MARK SPENCER, Baritone

Mark Spencer is Associate Professor of Voice at Cedarville University. He received his Doctor of Musical Arts degree at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, where he studied with Jack Coldiron. Dr. Spencer has taught at California Baptist University in Riverside and Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary near San Francisco. He has been a guest clinician in California, Illinois, New York, Pennsylvania, and Singapore. He has sung many roles with the Dayton Bach Society, Dayton Opera, Dayton Philharmonic, Ohio Lyric Theatre, Opera Funatics, numerous master chorales in Southern California, the Inland Opera Association of Southern California, Musica Viva! and the Singapore Symphony.

JUN KIM, Violin

Violinist and Conductor Jun Kim has played numerous recitals and concerts throughout the United States and Canada. He has been featured in master classes of Cho-lliang Lin, Pamela Frank, Federico Agostini, and Sergiu Schwart and has participated in the Aspen Music Festival, Bowdoin Music Festival, and Aria International Music Festival. Jun Kim has won prizes and awards in numerous competitions including the Starling Competition, the CCM Concerto Competition, the Tuesday Musical Competition of Akron, CIBC Canada National Competition, and the Vancouver Youth Symphony Concerto Competition. Professor Kim also has been the recipient of the Aspen Music Festival Fellowship, British Columbia Cultural Scholarship, and the Peabody Merit Scholarship, among others. Mr. Kim earned degrees in violin performance at prestigious schools such as the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University, and Indiana University, and an Artist Diploma from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music (CCM). He is currently completing his doctoral degree at CCM. Professor Kim has served as a violin teaching assistant to Dr. Won-Bin Yim at CCM and at the Aspen Music Festival, and he has served as a member of the violin faculty in CCM's preparatory department. His violin teachers include Victor Danchenko, Miriam Fried, and Ik-hwan Bae. Jun Kim serves as Assistant Professor of Violin and conducts the Cedarville University Orchestra.

CHARLES CLEVENERG, Piano

Known for his brilliant sound, the tasteful effectiveness of his interpretation, his easy manner at the piano, and his engaging interaction with audiences, Dr. Charles Clevenger effectively combines the roles of scholar, musician, visual artist, and entertainer. An active concert pianist and contest adjudicator, Chuck holds a doctorate in piano performance from the University of Cincinnati's College-Conservatory of Music. Dr. Clevenger has served on the faculty of Cedarville University for 28 years; he maintains a large piano studio, teaches the Cedarville course Introduction to the Humanities, and is an occasional lecturer in the Honors Program. Although he is known as a concert pianist and active painter, his first love is his university students, who reciprocated by electing him 2002 Faculty Member of the Year.
Cedarville University Masterworks Orchestra

Violin I
Jun Kim*
Lai Lai Louie*
Samantha Grelen
Elizabeth Preston
Connie Hsu*
Julia Hodecker
Julie Pickens

Violin II
Lydia Woodin*
Heman Shum
David Szymanski
Kristin Troyer
Bridget Russell
Kristin Wright

Viola
Jane Jaquith*
Jonathan Storch
Emily Powell
Erika Spudie
Natalie Winslow

Cello
Ren Ariizumi*
Audrey Hebson
Sera Cheon*
Meredith Lawrence
Jordan Flexman
Riley Snowden

Double Bass
Ranhee Na*
Joshua Beckler

Piccolo
Anna Reisenweaver

Flute
Lori Akins*
Jessica Kolody

Oboe
Lisa Grove*
Stephanie Haines

English Horn
Mary Slitka*

Bass Clarinet
Nora Louis Paul*

Clarinet
Bruce Curlette*
Kim Rayder

Bassoon
Richard Carnwright*
Sherylee Swartz*
Rachel Burton

Saxophone
Chet Jenkins*
David Kauffman
Kyle Schick

Horn
Richard Chenoweth*
Don Rader*
Jenny Moran
Jacob Hansen

Trumpet
Charles Pagnard*
Lindsey Richardson
Matthew Compton

Trombone
Tom Billing*
Andrew Price
Mike DiCuirci, Sr.∗

Tuba/Bass
Mike DiCuirci, Jr.∗

Percussion
John Carey*
Brent Fugate
Corey Richardson
Rocky Taylor
Martin Jellison
Ben Yeh (drum set)

Piano
Stephen Estep∗

Banjo
John Yount∗

Harp
Josiah Hamilton

* denotes guest player
## Masterworks Choir

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**Women's Choir – Beth Cram Porter, Director**  
**Jubilate – Roger O'Neel, Director**  
**Concert Chorale and Men's Glee Club – Lyle Anderson, Director**
The Cedarville University Department of Music, Art, and Worship provides a high-quality Christ-centered undergraduate education in music, building a strong artistic, intellectual, and practical foundation for professional careers and graduate studies. The department serves the University, church, and global community through outreach, performance, and educational activities. Our faculty of teaching-artists is dedicated to the education of the whole person and committed to helping students realize their highest level of musicianship and development as human beings created in the image of God.

For more information on Cedarville University, contact:

**Department of Music, Art, and Worship**
251 N. Main St.
Cedarville, Ohio 45314
Phone: 937-766-7728
Fax: 937-766-7661
E-mail: millerp@cedarville.edu
www.cedarville.edu/musicartworship

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**Coming Events**

- **March 25, 7 p.m.**
  Recital Hall
  **Adjunct Faculty Recital**
  Lori Akins, Flute

- **March 31, 12 p.m.**
  Recital Hall
  **Bach’s Lunch**
  Cedarville Chamber Music Ensembles

- **April 6, 12 p.m.**
  Recital Hall
  **Bach’s Lunch**
  The Demerits - Irish Music Concert

- **April 7, 7 p.m.**
  Recital Hall
  **Adjunct Faculty Recital**
  Mary Davis Fetherston, Cello

- **April 8, 7 p.m.**
  Recital Hall
  **Adjunct Faculty Recital**
  Daniel Sachs, Piano
About Cedarville

Home to 3,000 Christian students, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist university of arts, sciences, professional, and graduate programs located in southwest Ohio. Known for its biblical integration, rigorous academics, and balanced commitment to students' personal and professional success, the University consistently receives top-place rankings by U.S. News & World Report, The Princeton Review, and Peterson's Competitive Colleges. Each year major employers, law schools, medical schools, and seminaries visit campus to recruit our graduates. Daily chapels, discipleship groups, outreach ministries, and Bible classes inspire students toward greatness and equip them to engage the world for Jesus Christ.