



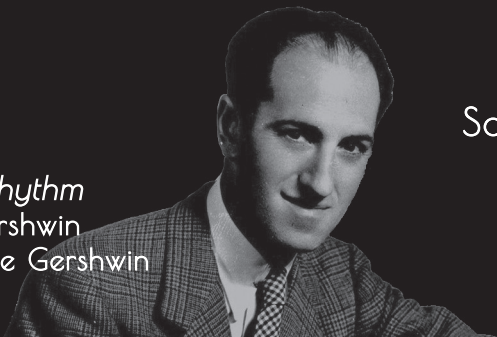
THE OTTUMWA AREA  
COMMUNITY CHORUS  
ADULT AND CHILDREN'S  
CHORUSES PRESENT

FEATURING THE MUSIC OF  
**GEORGE GERSHWIN**

**Friday, November 1, 2019**  
**7:00 pm**

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
**228 W 4th St., Ottumwa, Iowa 52501**

*Fascinatin' Rhythm*  
Lyrics: Ira Gershwin  
Music: George Gershwin



Got a little rhythm,  
A rhythm, a rhythm,  
That pit-a-pats through my brain,  
So darned persistent the day isn't distant  
When it'll drive me insane!

George Gershwin, originally named Jacob Gershvin, was born on September 26, 1898, in Brooklyn, New York, U.S., and died on July 11, 1937, in Hollywood, California. He is one of the most significant and popular American composers of all time. He was unique in that he not only wrote for Broadway musical theater, but also masterful orchestral and piano compositions in which he blended, in varying degrees, the techniques and forms of classical music with the stylistic nuances and techniques of popular music and jazz.

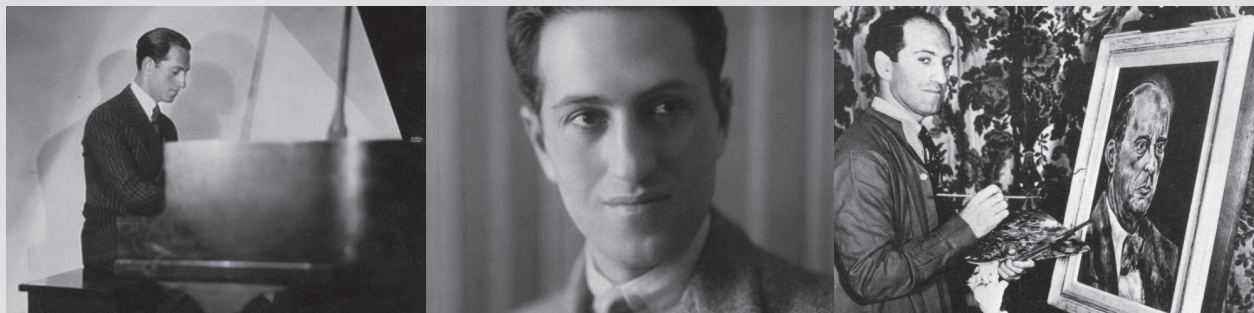
## EARLY LIFE AND CAREER

George is the second son of Moshe Gershovitz and Rose Bruskin, both immigrants from Russia. Although his family and friends were not musically inclined, Gershwin developed an early interest in music through his exposure to the popular and classical compositions he heard at school and in penny arcades. He began his musical education at age 11 when his family bought a secondhand upright piano so that George's older sibling, Ira, could learn the instrument. When George surprised everyone with his fluid playing of a popular song, which he had taught himself by following the keys on a neighbor's player piano, his parents decided that George would be the family member to receive lessons. He studied piano with the noted instructor Charles Hambitzer, who introduced his young student to the works of the great classical composers. Hambitzer was so impressed with Gershwin's potential that he refused payment for the lessons; he wrote in a letter to his sister, "I have a new pupil who will make his mark if anybody will. The boy is a genius!"

Gershwin continued to broaden his musical knowledge and compositional technique throughout his career with such mentors as the American composers Henry Cowell and Wallingford Riegger. After dropping out of school at age 15 Gershwin earned some money by making piano rolls for player pianos and by playing in New York nightclubs. His most important job in this period was his stint as a "song plugger" (probably the youngest in Tin Pan Alley), demonstrating sheet music for the Jerome Remick music publishing company. In an era when sheet music sales determined the popularity of a song, song pluggers such as Gershwin worked long hours pounding out tunes on the piano for potential customers.

Although Gershwin's musical creativity was perhaps slowed or delayed by his three-year stint in "plugger's purgatory" (as Gershwin biographer Isaac Goldberg termed it), it was nevertheless an experience that greatly improved his pianistic dexterity and increased his skills at improvisation and transposing. While still in his teens, Gershwin was known as one of the most talented pianists in the New York area and worked as an accompanist for popular singers and as a rehearsal pianist for Broadway musicals.

These early experiences greatly increased Gershwin's knowledge of jazz and popular music. He enjoyed, especially, the songs of Irving Berlin and Jerome Kern. He referred to Berlin as "America's Franz Schubert" and stated that Kern was "the first composer who made me conscious that most popular music was of inferior quality, and that musical comedy was made of better material." Their work inspired him to compose for the Broadway stage. In 1919, entertainer Al Jolson performed the Gershwin song "Swanee" in the musical *Sinbad*. As a result it became an enormous success, selling more than two million recordings and a million copies of sheet music and made Gershwin an overnight celebrity.



*Rhapsody in Blue*: Bandleader Paul Whiteman and Gershwin shared the common goal of bringing respectability to jazz music which, as evidenced in a *New York American* editorial in 1922, was still being regarded as “degrading, pathological, nerve-irritating.” To this end, in late 1923 Whiteman asked Gershwin to compose a piece for an upcoming concert—entitled “An Experiment in Modern Music”—at New York’s Aeolian Concert Hall. Legend has it that Gershwin forgot about the request until early January 1924, when he read a newspaper article announcing that the Whiteman concert on February 12 would feature a major new Gershwin composition. Writing at a furious pace in order to meet the deadline, Gershwin composed *Rhapsody in Blue*, perhaps his best-known work, in three weeks’ time. Due to the haste in which it was written, *Rhapsody in Blue* was somewhat unfinished at its premiere. Gershwin improvised much of the piano solo during the performance, and conductor Whiteman had to rely on a nod from Gershwin to cue the orchestra at the end of the solo. Nevertheless, the piece was a resounding success and brought Gershwin worldwide fame. The revolutionary work incorporated trademarks of the jazz idiom (blue notes, syncopated rhythms, onomatopoeic instrumental effects) into a symphonic context. Gershwin himself later reflected on the work:

**“THERE HAD BEEN SO MUCH CHATTER ABOUT THE LIMITATIONS OF JAZZ, NOT TO SPEAK OF THE MANIFEST MISUNDERSTANDINGS OF ITS FUNCTION. JAZZ, THEY SAID, HAD TO BE IN STRICT TIME. IT HAD TO CLING TO DANCE RHYTHMS. I RESOLVED, IF POSSIBLE, TO KILL THAT MISCONCEPTION WITH ONE STURDY BLOW... NO SET PLAN WAS IN MY MIND, NO STRUCTURE TO WHICH MY MUSIC WOULD CONFORM. THE *RHAPSODY*, YOU SEE, BEGAN AS A PURPOSE, NOT A PLAN.”**

## MID TO LATE CAREER

For the remainder of his career Gershwin devoted himself to both popular songs and orchestral compositions. His Broadway shows from the 1920s and '30s featured numerous songs that became standards: “Fascinating Rhythm,” “Oh, Lady Be Good,” “Sweet and Low-Down,” “Do, Do, Do,” “Someone to Watch over Me,” “Strike Up the Band,” “The Man I Love,” “S Wonderful,” “I’ve Got a Crush on You,” “Bidin’ My Time,” “Embraceable You,” “But Not for Me,” “Of Thee I Sing,” and “Isn’t It a Pity.” He also composed several songs for Hollywood films, such as “Let’s Call the Whole Thing Off,” “They All Laughed,” “They Can’t Take That Away from Me,” “A Foggy Day,” “Nice Work if You Can Get It,” “Love Walked In,” and “Love Is Here to Stay.” His lyricist for nearly all of these tunes was his older brother, Ira, whose glib, witty lyrics—often punctuated with slang, puns, and wordplay—received nearly as much acclaim as George’s compositions.

The Gershwin brothers comprised a somewhat unique songwriting partnership in that George’s melodies usually came first—a reverse of the process employed by most composing teams. (When asked by interviewers, “Which comes first, the words or the music?”, Ira’s standard response was, “The contract.”) So facile was George’s musical imagination that quality songs were often composed within a few minutes of improvisation, other times he dipped into his notebooks of song sketches that he accumulated over time (he once said, “I have more tunes in my head than I could put down on paper in a hundred years”) and embellished an old melody he had labeled “g.t.” (for “good tune”). Ira would then spend a week or more fitting words to the tune, polishing each line (to the extent that he was nicknamed



“The Jeweller” by other songwriters) until he was satisfied. Songwriter Arthur Schwartz regarded Ira’s efforts to be “a truly phenomenal feat, when one considers he was required to be brilliant within the most confining rhythms and accents.”

## LATER YEARS AND AFTERMATH

Gershwin was known as a “gregarious man whose huge ego was tempered by a genuinely magnetic personality.” He loved his work and approached every assignment with enthusiasm, never suffering from “composer’s block.” Throughout the first half of 1937 Gershwin began experiencing severe headaches and brief memory blackouts, although medical tests showed him to be in good health. However, by July, Gershwin exhibited impaired motor skills and drastic weight loss and required assistance in walking. He lapsed into a coma on July 9 and a spinal tap revealed the presence of a brain tumor. Gershwin never regained consciousness and died during surgery two days later. He was at the peak of his powers with several unrealized projects ahead of him (among them some sketches for a new string quartet and a new symphony, a proposed ballet score, and musical comedy collaborations with George S. Kaufman and DuBose Heyward). His death stunned the nation whose collective feelings can be summed up in a famous statement from novelist John O’Hara: “George Gershwin died on July 11, 1937, but I don’t have to believe it if I don’t want to.”

## FUN FACTS ABOUT GERSHWIN:

- **A LITTLE SHY:** GERSHWIN WAS ELEGANT, ATHLETIC, A GOOD DANCER, AND FRIENDLY, YET HE WAS ALSO MODEST, INGENUOUS, AND A LITTLE INSECURE AND WOULD HEAD TO THE PIANO AT PARTIES, WHERE HE WOULD PLAY FOR LONG STRETCHES OF TIME.
- **CANVASSING:** GERSHWIN BEGAN PAINTING AS A HOBBY BUT WAS GOOD AT IT AND BECAME MORE SERIOUS ABOUT IT AS HE WENT ALONG. HIS LATER PAINTINGS ARE WELL-REGARDED IN THE ART WORLD.
- **BOTH SIDES OF THE TRACKS:** GERSHWIN HAS OFTEN BEEN PEGGED AS AN UNLEARNED BROADWAY COMPOSER, THOUGH THE EVIDENCE TELLS A DIFFERENT TALE. ALTHOUGH NOT CONSERVATORY EDUCATED, HE SPENT ABOUT FIVE YEARS WITH GOOD PRIVATE TEACHERS BOTH IN PIANO AND IN BASIC THEORY AND COMPOSITION. HE CONTINUED TO STUDY THROUGHOUT HIS LIFE, DESPITE A HECTIC SCHEDULE, LEARNING CONDUCTING AND DOING ADVANCED STUDY WITH JOSEPH SCHILLINGER IN COUNTERPOINT AND ORCHESTRATION.
- **ODD FRIENDS:** ARNOLD SCHOENBERG LIVED NEAR GERSHWIN IN HOLLYWOOD AND THE TWO GOT ALONG WELL, NOT INFREQUENTLY PLAYING TENNIS TOGETHER. GERSHWIN’S LAST OIL PORTRAIT WAS OF SCHOENBERG.
- **SHOWBIZ:** GERSHWIN WAS NOT FAZED BY THE REALITIES OF THE THEATER. NEARLY A QUARTER OF **PORGY AND BESS** WAS CUT FOR THE OPERA’S BROADWAY RUN, YET HE NEVER COMPLAINED.
- **AN INNOVATOR OF COMPOSITIONAL STYLE:** AFTER THE DISAPPOINTING RECEPTION FOR **PORGY AND BESS**, GERSHWIN MOVED TO HOLLYWOOD AND WORKED ON MANY FILM SCORES. HIS MUSIC FOR **SHALL WE DANCE**, STARRING FRED ASTAIRE AND GINGER ROGERS, MARRIED BALLET WITH JAZZ IN A NEW WAY, AND RAN FOR MORE THAN AN HOUR IN LENGTH. IT TOOK GERSHWIN SEVERAL MONTHS TO WRITE AND ORCHESTRATE IT.
- **DURING THE COMPOSER’S LIFETIME:** AMERICAN MUSICAL COMEDY DEVELOPED AND REACHED A FIRST PEAK IN THE 1920S. THE INVENTION OF THE ELECTRIC MICROPHONE CHANGED MUSIC RECORDING AND PERFORMANCE STYLES. COMMERCIAL RADIO BECAME STAPLE ENTERTAINMENT. MOVIES WITH SYNCHRONIZED SOUND APPEARED AND MOVIE MUSICALS BECAME BOX OFFICE GOLD.

## REFERENCES/SOURCES FOR PROGRAM NOTES:

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## QUOTABLE QUOTES ABOUT GERSHWIN

- ONE YEAR AFTER **RHAPSODY IN BLUE**, GERSHWIN EXTENDED HIS INNOVATIVE JAZZ-INFLUENCED CLASSICAL STYLE EVEN FURTHER WITH HIS **PIANO CONCERTO IN F**. IT WAS PREMIERED BY THE COMPOSER WITH THE **NEW YORK SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**, CONDUCTED BY **WALTER DAMROSCH**. THE CONDUCTOR DESCRIBED GERSHWIN AS “THE PRINCE WHO HAS TAKEN **CINDERELLA [JAZZ]** BY THE HAND AND OPENLY PROCLAIMED HER A PRINCESS TO THE ASTONISHED WORLD, NO DOUBT TO THE FURY OF HER ENVOUS SISTERS.”
- IN THE MID-1920S, GERSHWIN STAYED IN **PARIS** FOR A SHORT PERIOD, DURING WHICH HE APPLIED TO STUDY COMPOSITION WITH THE NOTED **NADIA BOULANGER**, WHO, ALONG WITH SEVERAL OTHER PROSPECTIVE TUTORS SUCH AS **MAURICE RAVEL**, REJECTED HIM AS A STUDENT. SHE WAS AFRAID THAT “RIGOROUS CLASSICAL STUDY WOULD RUIN HIS JAZZ-INFLUENCED STYLE.” WHILE IN THE FRENCH CAPITAL, GERSHWIN WROTE **AN AMERICAN IN PARIS**.
- **MAURICE RAVEL** REFUSED TO MENTOR GERSHWIN, SAYING HE WAS FINE THE WAY HE WAS. GERSHWIN ALSO SOUGHT TO STUDY WITH **IGOR STRAVINSKY**. WHEN HE APPROACHED THE COMPOSER AT A PARTY STRAVINSKY SURPRISED HIM WITH THE QUESTION “HOW MUCH MONEY DO YOU MAKE A YEAR?” UPON HEARING THE ANSWER STRAVINSKY REPLIED, “PERHAPS I SHOULD STUDY WITH YOU, MR. GERSHWIN.”
- GERSHWIN WAS INTRIGUED BY THE MODERNIST WORKS OF **BERG**, **SHOSTAKOVICH**, **STRAVINSKY**, **MILHAUD**, AND **SCHOENBERG**. HE ASKED **SCHOENBERG** - WHO HE ALSO PAINTED - FOR COMPOSITION LESSONS. **SCHOENBERG** REFUSED, REPORTEDLY SAYING, “I WOULD ONLY MAKE YOU A BAD **SCHOENBERG**, AND YOU’RE SUCH A GOOD **GERSHWIN** ALREADY.”

## FUN FACTS ABOUT SELECTED SONGS IN TONIGHT’S CONCERT

**I Got Rhythm**, One of the Gershwins’ best-known collaborations, was introduced by **Ethel Merman** in the musical *Girl Crazy* (1930). The following year, Gershwin scored a lengthy, elaborate piano arrangement of the song, and in late 1933 he arranged the piece into a set of variations for piano and orchestra; “I Got Rhythm” Variations has since become one of Gershwin’s most-performed orchestral works. In addition, the 32-bar structure of “I Got Rhythm” has become the second-most frequently used harmonic progression in jazz improvisation, next to that of the traditional 12-bar blues.

Gershwin’s piano score for “I Got Rhythm” was part of a larger project begun in 1931, George Gershwin’s Songbook. A collection of Gershwin’s personal favorites among his many hit tunes, it featured the composer’s own adaptations designed “for the above-average pianist.” Offering valuable insight into Gershwin’s use of rhythm and harmony, as well as his own piano style, the Songbook selections have become concert staples for several noted pianists throughout the years and have occasionally been adapted into full orchestra arrangements.

**Love Is Here to Stay** was first performed by Kenny Baker in *The Goldwyn Follies* but became popular when it was sung by Gene Kelly to Leslie Caron in the film *An American in Paris* (1951).] The song appeared in *Forget Paris* (1995) and *Manhattan* (1979). It can also be heard in the film *When Harry Met Sally*. (1989) sung by Louis Armstrong and Ella Fitzgerald.

“Love is Here to Stay” was the last musical composition George Gershwin completed before his death on July 11, 1937. Ira Gershwin wrote the lyrics after George’s death as a tribute to his brother. Although George had not written a verse for the song, he did have an idea for it that both Ira and pianist Oscar Levant had heard before his death. When a verse was needed, Ira and Levant recalled what George had in mind. Composer Vernon Duke reconstructed the music for the verse at the beginning of the song. Originally titled “It’s Here to Stay” and then “Our Love Is Here to Stay,” the song was finally published as “Love Is Here to Stay.” Ira Gershwin said that for years he wanted to change the song’s name back to “Our Love Is Here to Stay,” but he felt it wouldn’t be right since the song had already become a standard.

**They Can’t Take That Away from Me** came into being when “George had an idea for a melody, a simple but haunting rhythmic manipulation of a single tone” beginning with four repeated notes - three quarters and an eighth. After listening, Ira, his brother and lyricist, responded by saying, “If you can give me two more notes in the first part, I can get, ‘The way you wear your hat’,” which of course became the beloved first phrase of the first refrain - the first thing they wouldn’t be able to take away from him (him being Fred Astaire’s character) because they were getting divorced the next day. After that it didn’t take the brothers long to finish the song, and George was soon playing it - plugging it - at the houses of his recently transplanted New York friends, including Harold and Anya Arlen. “He loved it,” Arlen remembered, “and every time he played it he asked Annie - in her little voice - to sing” (*Jablonski*, p. 302). Besides “the way you wear your hat,” another item on Ira’s list of what they couldn’t take away was “the way you sing off key.” Ira had cleverly managed to include a negative trait but in a way that made the listener understand it not as negative at all but as charming and appealing. Not long after “Shall We Dance” was released, George and his friend S. N. Behrman (the American playwright and screenwriter) were riding through Beverly Hills discussing how much they admired Ira’s work, when Behrman cited this particular line to George saying “how marvelous it was of Ira to have added singing off-key to the list of the heroin’s perfections - how it bathed nostalgia in humor.” (*Rosenberg*, p. 342). They must have concurred on how well the line’s playful irony manifested Ira’s genius. The basic meaning of the song is that even if the lovers part, though physically separated the nostalgic memories cannot be forced from them. Thus, it is a song of mixed joy and sadness.



# I Got Rhythm

## SOPRANOS

ROBERTA ABRAMS  
 CAROL FREVERT  
 GAIL GRANNEMAN  
 MAGGIE HAW  
 CRYSTAL JAMES  
 MIRIAM KENNING  
 STACIE KNOX  
 SYDNEY MAXWELL  
 ABBEY MORRISSEY  
 SHANE ORNE  
 RONDA DENNIS SMITHART  
 EMILY SPEER  
 LILA STOCK  
 CAROL WEISSWASSER

## ALTOS

KAYA BACA  
 JODI BEDNER  
 JUNE BURGER  
 PAM ECKLUND  
 SARA McELROY  
 SANDRA PARKER  
 SUE PIXLEY  
 SHARON SHAW  
 ELIZABETH SIMONSON  
 LIZ STUFFLEBEEM

## TENORS

JOHN CONNET  
 MARCUS LOWENBERG  
 KAREN MERCHANT  
 CLYDE PEARCE  
 ALEXANDER RENNEBERG  
 LYLE STIRLING

## BASSES

BRANDON BOSSIER  
 DUANE COWGER  
 ISAAC FORD  
 BILL HORNBACK  
 QUINTIN HULL  
 TREY HULL  
 MITCHEL MELVIN  
 BILL MERCHANT

George Gershwin

Days can be any, With a sigh; Don't need what can buy.



## CHILDREN'S CHORUS

MCKENNA BASKETT  
 JOSEPH BOSSOU  
 JADA BROWN  
 ADILENE DURAN  
 MARIE FANGAMOU  
 ALYSSA FLETES  
 ADDISON GABEL  
 JULIET GOLSTON

MAKAYLA GOLSTON  
 MAGGIE HAW  
 BOBBY HAW  
 MARY KATE HINTON  
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 MAKAYLA HOWARD  
 TANIA HOWARD  
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BAILEY JOHNSON  
 FINLEY JOHNSON  
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 SHALLIS LOUCKS  
 SIANNA LOUCKS  
 SINCLAIRE LOUCKS  
 SYRUS LOUCKS  
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KALLEN LOWENBERG  
 TYLER LOWENBERG  
 ISABELLA MORRISSEY  
 EVAN MORRISSEY  
 LYDIA MORRISSEY  
 ELIZA ORTH  
 BELLA SCHLOTTER  
 PAIZLEE THOMASON

get that way.

rhy - thm,

I got mu - sic, I got my man Who could ask for a-ny-thing more?

## CONCERT ORDER

# “I Got Rhythm”

### Combined Chorus

**I GOT RHYTHM** (from “GIRL CRAZY”) ..... George & Ira Gershwin/arr. Dorothy Horn

### Adult Chorus

**OUR LOVE IS HERE TO STAY** (from “GOLDWYN FOLLIES”) ..... George & Ira Gershwin/arr. Mark Hayes

**THEY CAN'T TAKE THAT AWAY FROM ME** (from “SHALL WE DANCE?”) ..... George & Ira Gershwin/arr. Kirby Shaw  
German Ramos-Percussionist

**EMBRACEABLE YOU** (from “GIRL CRAZY”) ..... George & Ira Gershwin/arr. Kirby Shaw

**FASCINATING RHYTHM** (from “LADY BE GOOD”) ..... George & Ira Gershwin/arr. Mac Huff  
German Ramos-Percussionist

**SUMMERTIME** (from “PORGY AND BESS”) ..... George & Ira Gershwin/arr. Mac Huff

### Combined Chorus

**LET'S CALL THE WHOLE THING OFF** (from “SHALL WE DANCE?”) ..... George & Ira Gershwin/arr. Russell Robinson

## INTERMISSION

### Children's Chorus

**SING, SING, SING** ..... Louis Prima/arr. Philip Kern

**YAKETY YAK** ..... Lieber/Stoller, arr. Roger Emerson

### Women Only

**I'VE GOT A CRUSH ON YOU** (from “STRIKE UP THE BAND”) ..... George & Ira Gershwin/arr. Jay Althouse

### Adult Chorus

**STRIKE UP THE BAND** (from “STRIKE UP THE BAND”) ..... George & Ira Gershwin/arr. Mark Hayes  
German Ramos-Percussionist

**I GOT PLENTY O' NUTTIN'** (from “PORGY AND BESS”) ..... George & Ira Gershwin/arr. Douglas Wagner

**SOMEONE TO WATCH OVER ME** (from “OH, KAY!”) ..... George & Ira Gershwin/arr. Jay Althouse

**THEY ALL LAUGHED** (from “SHALL WE DANCE?”) ..... George & Ira Gershwin/arr. Mark Hayes

### Combined Chorus

**CLAP YO' HANDS** (from “OH, KAY!”) ..... George & Ira Gershwin/arr. Pete King  
German Ramos-Percussionist

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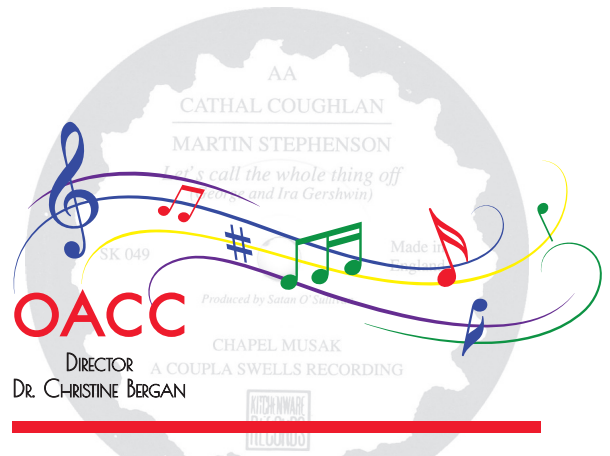
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Dr. Christine Bergan has served as director of Ottumwa Area Community Chorus since February 2016. Bergan is an Ottumwa native. She holds a Ph.D in Voice Science from the University of Iowa, a Master's Degree in Vocal Performance from the University of Northern Iowa, and a Master's Degree in Speech and Language Pathology from the University of Iowa. She currently teaches applied voice at IHCC and works for the GPAEA and medical rehabilitation companies as a speech-language pathologist. Bergan has over thirty years of experience as a professional vocalist and vocal instructor and ten years of experience as a choral director. She has performed as a soloist with the St. Louis Symphony Chorus, Southeast Iowa Symphony Orchestra, Ottumwa Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Singers of Iowa City, Swing Street Big Band in Iowa City, and has performed in Carnegie Hall. March of 2018, she was the soloist with SEISO in the Saint Saens "Requiem."

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ACCOMPANIST  
CHERYL MILLER  
ANITA MEINERT

Cheryl Miller earned a Bachelor of Music degree in piano performance from Truman State University where she was a student of Frederic Kirchberger. At the University of Iowa, Miller studied with William Doppmann & Kenneth Amada. Miller has accompanied Southeast Iowa Symphony Orchestra's artist-in-residence and has presented several duo-piano recitals in Ottumwa with Virginia Schmucker. She has performed with the Truman State University Orchestra, Southeast Iowa Symphony Orchestra, and Ottumwa Symphony Orchestra and is a founding member of the Encore Piano Trio. Miller has taught instrumental music in the Ottumwa Schools and has taught piano privately and at Indian Hills Community College & Hannibal-LeGrange Community College. Three of her students have been winners of OSO and SEISO young artists competitions. Three of her students have been winners of OSO and SEISO Young Artists competitions.

Anita Meinert is an Assistant Teaching Professor of Music at William Penn University. She holds a BA in music education from William Penn University and an MME from Boston University. A native of Ottumwa, Iowa, she is a music theatre enthusiast and has been the director of music for many of the musical theatre productions put on by the Oskaloosa Community Theatre organization. As an accompanist, Ms. Meinert has performed with Lou Rawls & Simon Estes, in conjunction with the Greater Ottumwa Vocal Arts Project (GOVAP) as well as accompanying the Oskaloosa Community Schools vocal ensembles. An active musician, she has also played clarinet for the Oskaloosa City Band, Wm Penn Concert band and jazz piano with the Smokey Row jazz combo.

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ACCOMPANIST  
MARTHANA NEWLAND

Marthana Newland studied piano for 8 years under Dr. Ardella Ringwalt of Oakley, Kansas. She holds an honorary degree of Doctor of Sacred Music from Logos Graduate School. She is an ordained minister and has served as church musician for over 50 years. Marthana has her own private studio and has taught piano lessons for 45 years. She presently teaches 47 students. Several of her students have pursued vocations in music and performing arts. She has been married to Byron for 59 years and is a mother to 3 and a grandmother and great-grandmother.

German Ramos, percussionist, was born and raised in El Salvador. He has been living in the USA since 2006 where he met his wife, and now they have a wonderful and handsome little boy. He has always liked music and I was interested in playing the guitar, but believes God led him to the piano. German plays the drums and occasionally the piano as part of a praise and worship team at First Pentecostal Assembly of God Church in Ottumwa. His musical career began in 2008, initially by watching videos on YouTube and then by playing other people's instruments. He currently volunteers to play drums in his church. In his free time he likes to spend time with his wife and son and feels that is the best part of his day.

THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING TONIGHTS PERFORMANCE OF

*"I Got Rhythm"*

UPCOMING - DECEMBER 1, 9:30 A.M. / SING IN "ALL MUSIC" SERVICE / FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## FUN FACTS ABOUT SELECTED SONGS IN TONIGHT'S CONCERT

**Porgy and Bess: "Summertime" and "I Got Plenty O' Nuttin":** Porgy and Bess is a three-act opera written by Gershwin in 1935 to the libretto by DuBose Heyward. The choice of subject matter was a radical one and Gershwin did not receive a welcome response following the opera's premiere, especially as the cast were black. The opera centers on the character of Porgy, a disabled, black beggar and his brave efforts to save Bess from the clutches of her abusive lover called Crown.

Gershwin's first version of the opera ran for four hours (counting the two intermissions), and was performed privately in a concert version in Carnegie Hall, in the fall of 1935. He chose as his choral director Eva Jessye, who also directed her own renowned choir. The world premiere performance took place at the Colonial Theatre in Boston on September 30, 1935—the try-out for a work intended initially for Broadway where the opening took place at the Alvin Theatre in New York City on October 10, 1935. During rehearsals and in Boston, Gershwin made many cuts and refinements to shorten the running time and tighten the dramatic action. The run on Broadway lasted 124 performances.

From the outset, the opera's depiction of African Americans attracted controversy. Virgil Thomson, a white American composer, stated that "Folklore subjects recounted by an outsider are only valid as long as the folk in question is unable to speak for itself, which is certainly not true of the American Negro in 1935." An apocryphal quote attributed to Duke Ellington allegedly stated, "the times are here to debunk Gershwin's lampblack Negroisms," but the quote was probably invented by a journalist who interviewed Ellington about the opera. Ellington publicly repudiated the article shortly after its publication. Ellington's response to the 1952 Breen revival was completely the opposite. His telegram to the producer read: "Your Porgy and Bess the superb, singing the gonest, acting the craziest, Gershwin the greatest."

Gershwin created a unique operatic sound world, combining folk, spiritual, jazz and classical forms, weaving them into one of the most compelling operas of all time. It contains some of the best-known songs written by Gershwin including "Summertime," "Bess You Is My Woman Now," and "It Ain't Necessarily So." The opera underwent many revisions by Gershwin following the opening performance and has been adapted numerous times by other arrangers over the following years. Many of the songs have found their way into the repertoire of countless Jazz singers and into the hearts and minds of Gershwin admirers.

**Summertime** is the best-known selection from Porgy and Bess. It is also recognized as one of the most covered songs in the history of recorded music, with more than 33,000 covers by various bands, ensembles and individual musicians. The song soon became a popular and much recorded jazz standard, described as "without doubt ... one of the finest songs the composer ever wrote ... Gershwin's highly evocative writing brilliantly mixes elements of jazz and the song styles of blacks in the southeast United States from the early twentieth century". Composer and lyricist Stephen Sondheim has characterized Heyward's lyrics for "Summertime" and "My Man's Gone Now" as "the best lyrics in the musical theater." Gershwin began composing the song in December 1933, attempting to create his own spiritual in the style of the African American folk music of the period. Gershwin had completed setting DuBose Heyward's poem to music by February 1934, and spent the next 20 months completing and orchestrating the score of the opera.

**Let's Call the Whole Thing Off** is a song written by George Gershwin and Ira Gershwin for the 1937 film *Shall We Dance*, where it was introduced by Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers as part of a celebrated dance duet on roller skates. The music is marked "Brightly." The song is most famous for its "You like tomato /tə'meɪtə/ / And I like to-mah-to /tə'mɑ:tə/" and other verses comparing their different regional dialects. The differences in pronunciation are not simply regional, however, but serve more specifically to identify class differences. At the time, typical American pronunciations were considered less "refined" by the upper-class, and there was a specific emphasis on the "broader" a sound. This class distinction with respect to pronunciation has been retained in caricatures, especially in the theater, where the longer a pronunciation is most strongly associated with the word "darling."

**Strike up the Band** is from the musical of the same name, written in 1927, based on a book by Morrie Ryskind, lyrics by Ira Gershwin and music by George Gershwin. It ran in Philadelphia that year, unsuccessfully, and on Broadway in 1930 after the original book by George S. Kaufman was revised. The story satirizes America's taste for war: America declares war on Switzerland over a trivial trade issue.

**Someone to Watch Over Me** is a 1926 song written for singer Gertrude Lawrence in the musical *Oh, Kay!* (1926). Originally, "Someone to Watch Over Me" was an up-tempo swing-style of song, but after experimenting one day George Gershwin played the song as a ballad, and it has remained in that slower/ballad style from that time to the present day.

UPCOMING - DECEMBER 14, HOLLY DAYS CONCERT / SEISO / MT. PLEASANT, IA

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