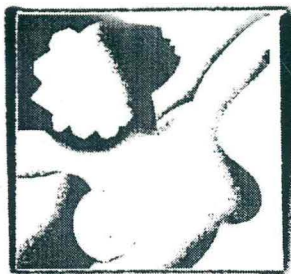


bennington college presents

A GERSHWIN CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION



FRIDAY SATURDAY SUNDAY
DECEMBER 11 - 13TH, 1998; 8:00PM
MATINEE SATURDAY, 2:00PM



I GOT RHYTHM

EXCEPTIONAL, YET LESSER-KNOWN PIECES

BY GEORGE GERSHWIN

SUSAN A. GREENWALL WORKSHOP

AMY WILLIAMS AND ALLEN SHAWN, PIANO

- : THAT SWEET AND LOW DOWN
- : TWO WALTZES IN C
- : IMPROMPTU IN TWO KEYS
- : PRELUDE (MELODY #17)
- : I GOT RHYTHM VARIATIONS (1930)



THE WOODEN NICKEL CAFE

AN INTERMISSION IN NEWMAN COURT

WITH BRUCE WILLIAMSON

PLAYING GERSHWIN STANDARDS ON THE UPRIGHT

REFRESHMENTS AVAILABLE



BLUE MONDAY

BY GEORGE GERSHWIN

MUSIC DIRECTOR AND CONDUCTOR IDA FAIELLA STAGE DIRECTOR AND COSTUME DESIGNER DANIEL MICHAELSON

SCENIC DESIGNER
PETER SEWARD

LIGHTING DESIGNER
MICHAEL GIANNITI

ORCHESTRAL REALIZATION
PHILIP SALATHE

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER
STEVE ESPACH

CAST

(IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

MIKE MATTHEW PILLISCHER
SAM RYAN BAROLET-FOGARTY
JOE DUFFY HAVENS
TOM MATTHEW FOLLETTE
VI CAMILLE HARTMAN
DANCERS CAYLI CAVACO
 ANNA ZIMMER
 KELLEY BRYANT

ORCHESTRA

PIANO NATHAN JEW
VIOLIN I BARRY FINCLAIR
VIOLIN II BRONWEN DAVIES-MASON
VIOLA SARA CRONAN
CELLO I MICHAEL CLOSE
CELLO II MELISSA COLLINS
BASS PHILIP SALATHE
TENOR SAX BRUCE WILLIAMSON
ALTO SAX JENNIFER DOYLE-BECK
TRUMPET RONALD ANDERSON
PERCUSSION JESSE OLSEN



At the centennial of his birth, Brooklyn-born composer George Gershwin remains one of America's most intriguing cultural figures. His best-known orchestral works, *Rhapsody in Blue*, *Concerto in F*, and *An American in Paris* are all mainstays of today's orchestral repertoire. *Porgy and Bess*, composed in collaboration with his brother, lyricist Ira Gershwin, has become one of the most popular operas of the twentieth century. Numerous songs by the Gershwin brothers have entered the American consciousness as popular and jazz standards.

It is our intention in this evening's program to celebrate the creative scope of this quintessential American composer. Was George Gershwin America's greatest composer? This is, in the end, a meaningless question. What can be said, however, is that Gershwin was the most *American* composer in the democracy of his idiom and the brash energy that boiled from the musical melting pot of operatic, Jewish and African-American thematic material.

The twenty-three-year-old Gershwin and lyricist B. G. De Sylva tried to persuade impresario George White to let them write a one-act opera on jazz idioms as part of his *Scandals of 1922*. When White finally agreed, the duo had only five days—and according to Gershwin, nights—to complete it. On opening night, one New York critic sensed the importance of what he had heard, calling *Blue Monday* “the first real American opera.” Scott Joplin's pioneering opera *Treemonisha* had been composed in 1911, but sadly remained in total obscurity. But if Gershwin had not yet written “the great American opera,” he did do so only thirteen years later with *Porgy and Bess*. Anyone listening with even one ear can hear the groundwork for that great opera in this small work.

The presentation of Gershwin's early work *Blue Monday* by Bennington College students is a sweet experience for me. In June of 1987, my “vocal cohort,” Tom Bogdan, and I sang in the Lincoln Center premiere of this piece with the Alvin Ailey Dance Company and the Concordia Jazz Orchestra. At that time, this was considered a musical rarity, a “find.” In fact, many musicians did not know of the existence of this piece. In true Bennington style, our young students are producing a work that many seasoned musicians have still not heard. This production has been greatly served by the creativity and dedication of director and costume designer Danny Michaelson, as well as by the skills of our composer intern Phil Salathé ('98) who created the orchestral scoring which is unique to this production; and Nathan Jew ('01), who put in countless (uncomplaining) hours at musical, staging and choreographic rehearsals. I think it's been worth it. I hope you will as well.

Ida Faiella

How does one begin? How did I begin? When I first listened to the tape that Ida Faiella gave me, I thought that *Blue Monday* would make a great vehicle for Ida as Vi. On the second or third listening I realized it *was* Ida on the tape. (Soon after I recognized Tom Bogdan as Joe.) The presentational “framing” of *Blue Monday*, built into the piece itself, supported my idea to make a costume reference of Ida the conductor as a former Vi.

My challenge with *Blue Monday* was to figure out a way to present in 1998 an opera that was performed originally in 1922 by white singers in blackface. I knew from the start that I wanted to make a clear separation between the audience and the stage, and I knew I wanted the orchestra to be integrated with the opera onstage, as opposed to being in a pit. I hoped for *Blue Monday* to be seen, not as corny, but as a period jewel, the work of a youthful composer, in which you can hear the seeds of his masterworks, *Rhapsody in Blue* and *Porgy and Bess*.

The more I researched the 1920’s, the less I was convinced that the 1920’s was the right time period for setting “Blue Monday.” After the other designers and I looked at painters of the Harlem Renaissance for color and mood, we aimed to create a non-specific, but stylized world in the recent past.

In different versions of the original prologue Mike, and sometimes Joe, announces that the audience will see a “colored tragedy.” Ida and I changed the words to “lover’s tragedy,” not out of Political Correctness, but because we felt that words such as “colored tragedy” might actually prevent the audience from hearing the music. We changed other words as well, such as “white man’s opera” to “grand opera.” Different versions of the libretto included an additional character, Sweetpea or Cookie, who plays the piano and delivers the telegram. Initially, I thought that Nathan Jew could play Sweetpea, leaving his grand piano in the orchestra to play the upright piano in Mike’s Saloon. I ended up cutting Sweetpea and giving his stage business to Sam, which helped make Sam a fuller character.

I had originally thought that there would be three male dancers in addition to the three women, and it was Michael Giannitti who suggested that the three women dance with the three male singers onstage.

Blue Monday marks my directing debut (and maybe, swan song). In the Bennington style of learning by doing I truly enjoyed discovering character, movement and form (spatial and stylistic) of *Blue Monday* during the rehearsal process. Some of the information is in the words, but most is in Gershwin’s music. I owe a lot of thanks to my collaborators--the singers, dancers, Ida, Steve, Sara, Pete, Michael, Terry T., tireless Nathan at the rehearsal piano, my student assistants, and other colleagues, who helped me with ideas, research, and images.

Daniel Michaelson



PRODUCTION STAFF

ASSISTANT MUSICAL DIRECTOR
SPECIAL CHOREOGRAPHIC ASSISTANCE
ASSISTANTS TO MR. MICHAELSON

NATHAN JEW
SARA RUDNER
CAYLI CAVACO (DIRECTING, COSTUMES, CHOREOGRAPHY)
MAGGIE HALSTEAD (DIRECTING, COSTUMES)
MEAGAN MATTINGLY (COSTUMES)
ALEJANDRA SERRANO (COSTUMES)
TERRY TEITELBAUM (COSTUMES)
ANNA ZIMMER (COSTUMES, CHOREOGRAPHY)

ASSISTANT LIGHTING DESIGNER
ORCHESTRA MANAGER
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER FOR *BLUE MONDAY*
ASSISTANT STAGE MANGER FOR "RHYTHM" AND "CAFE"
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
SET CONSTRUCTION LAB

IAN GREENFIELD
SARA CRONAN
CARMEN DE ALMEIDA
BENNETT STRAUSS
ALAN DEL VECCHIO

KIM ANDROLOWICZ, MARCOS BARBERY,
RYAN BAROLET-FOGARTY, JENNIFER DOYLE-BECK,
MELIS BILGIN, KELLEY BRYANT, GENEVIEVE BURKE,
MATTHEW FOLLETTE, BILGE GULTURK, KATE KING,
MIA LEVITT, NICOLE MACAGNA, CLODAGH MCCLOSKEY,
MARIAH MCGILL, RYAN NEALON,
GARTH SILBERSTEIN, MELISSA ST. PIERRE,
TRAVIS TAYLOR, SARA TETEN, DANIEL WARREN,
ANA WILLIAMS

SCENIC ARTISTS LAB

FRED ALBEE, CHRIS D'AGOSTINO, SARA SCRIPPS,
MASOOD TEHNIYET, NISSA WILSON, LAURA WILSON,
SARAH WOLF

PROPERTIES LAB

CAMILLE HARTMAN
MARIA TRIPODI

COSTUME SHOP SUPERVISOR
COSTUME SHOP LAB

TERRY TEITELBAUM
KATI BICKNELL, SUMMER BRENNAN, SARAH CLARKE,
NICOLE DONNELLY, ELIZABETH GELLER,
NIWAS LAWOT, PRIANKA NAGPAL, KRISTY PHINNEY,
CHANDRA REBER, ALEJANDRA SERRANO,
HANNA STROM-MARTIN

PRODUCTION RUN CREW

LIGHT BOARD OPERATOR FOR THE CELEBRATION
STAGEHANDS FOR *BLUE MONDAY*

STAGEHAND FOR "RHYTHM" AND "CAFE"
FOLLOW SPOT OPERATORS FOR *BLUE MONDAY*

WARDROBE FOR *BLUE MONDAY*

KATHLEEN CONROY
JAMES NYMAN
LUCIA GREEN-WIESKEL
AMANDA B. GREVES
ANNE HILL
RICK LITTLE
SARAH KERMENSKY
COLLEEN LEONARDI
LAUREN REED

WORKSTUDY STAFF

SCENE SHOP

STEPHEN HOWARD

DAN LEVITIS

SKY BENDER-DEMOLL (MASTERS)

KAITI CARPENTER, JESSAMYN HARRIS, MARLON HURT,

FRIEDA KIPAR, NATHANIEL MEER, AISHA WALLS,

ELIZABETH WARD, SHANNON WEST

COSTUME SHOP

KATHERINE CARPENTER, SARAH COURTNEY,

TILKE ELKINS, MAGGIE HALSTEAD,

JEANNA HARNDEN, NATASHA HEINES, LEAH WALSH,

ANNA ZIMMER

LIGHT SHOP

GARIN MARSCHALL (MASTER)

SEHER AZIZ, RYAN BAROLET-FOGARTY,

JAMES T. EARLE, JASON EKSUZIAN, ELIZABETH ESCH,

JASMINE HAMED, MARLON HURT

MAKE-UP

TERRI LEWIN (SUPERVISOR)

SEHER AZIZ

HANNAH STROM-MARTIN

PROPS

MARGARET EISENBERG (MASTER)

HEATHER BECKETT

AADYA BEDI

PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT ASSISTANT

ELIZABETH ESCH

AUDIO RECORDING ENGINEER

LARRY WINELAND

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

PRODUCTION COORDINATOR

IDA FAIELLA

PRODUCTION MANAGER

STEVEN ESPACH

MUSIC PROGRAM COORDINATOR

SUZANNE JONES

DANCE/DRAMA PROGRAM COORDINATOR

ANN RESCH

MUSIC LIBRARIAN

SUSAN REISS

HOUSE MANAGER

MARGARET EISENBERG

HOUSE STAFF/RESERVATIONS

ELIZABETH ESCH

POSTER/PROGRAM DESIGN

AMANDA B. GREVES

DAN MOHR

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

MIKE LEARY

PHOTOGRAPHER

CYNTHIA LOCKLIN

THANKS

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The audience will not be admitted to Greenwall until a convenient place in the program or into the Margot Tenney Theatre once the performance has begun.

The taking of flash photography, eating or drinking is not allowed in the theatre in courtesy to the performers on stage and your fellow audience members. Please do not bring your Intermission snacks and beverages into the theatre.

Restrooms and water fountains are located in Newman Court.

Guests wishing to greet the performers may meet them outside the dressing room. Please use the stairway at the glass end of Newman Court.
