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**92ND STREET Y,** Theresa L. Kaufmann Concert Hall Tuesday, October 20, 2015, 7:30 pm

## VINCE GIORDANO AND THE NIGHTHAWKS ORCHESTRA

TED ROSENTHAL, piano

MAURICE PERESS, conductor

### Opening Night 2015

GEORGE GERSHWIN (1898-1937) Overture to Strike Up the Band (arr. by Maurice Peress)

GERSHWIN Piano Concerto in F

(Ferde Grofé version for jazz band, reconstructed and arr. by Vince Giordano and Maurice Peress)

Allegro

Adagio - Andante con moto

Allegro agitato

### INTERMISSION

GERSHWIN "That Certain Feeling" — "I Got Rhythm"

(trans. by Vince Giordano)

GERSHWIN Rhapsody in Blue

(Ferde Grofé version for jazz band)

Steinway Piano

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# an INTRODUCTION to the MUSIC

BY VINCE GIORDANO & MAURICE PERESS

As we painstakingly reconstructed the missing score of Ferde Grofé's orchestration for the Concerto in F — from original orchestral parts played at Carnegie Hall in 1926, now stored at the Paul Whiteman Archive at Williams College — Mr.

Giordano offered up images and details about Whiteman's players: the sporty pencil mustache of Chester Hazlett, the amazing virtuoso fast tonguing of Frank Trumbauer on his C-melody sax, the drummer George Marsh being able to play bass lines on his pedal timps.

Whiteman's extraordinary band featured multi-instrument reed players who played all the saxes (Mr. Giordano plays bass sax, and our six reed players cover the rest of the family up to the tiny sopranino)

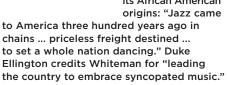
as well as all the symphonic woodwinds, including the rare Heckelphone, invented for Richard Strauss's *Salome*. The 1926 Whiteman band gave prominence to many hot jazz players, trumpeter Bix Beiderbecke being the most familiar.

There is an irony here. Gershwin was very proud of his scoring of the Concerto, his first and brilliant attempt at symphonic orchestration. He even arranged to have it tested by a theater orchestra before handing it over to Walter Damrosch for

its debut with the New York Symphony.
Still, after the immense success of the Rhapsody in Blue, premiered by Whiteman two years earlier, Gershwin could not refuse Whiteman's desire to feature the work at his second "Experiment in Modern

Music" Concert thus Grofé's unusual augmented jazz band orchestration of the Concerto in F.

Many jazz aficionados fail to recognize Paul Whiteman's contributions, branding him as a "moldy fig" or "square." As big fans and students of his work, we note that in the very same year the Grofé/ Whiteman version of the Concerto in F was premiered (1926), Whiteman began his book Jazz with a sensitive encomium to its African American



The Paul Whiteman Orchestra, c. 1921

We thank 92nd Street Y for this opportunity to present an all-Gershwin evening with the marvelous pianist Ted Rosenthal. Capturing and preserving the sound and style of 1920s and '30s America has been our shared mission.

## NOTES on the PROGRAM

BY SANDRA HYSLOP WITH VINCE GIORDANO & MAURICE PERES



## George Gershwin

Born in Brooklyn, September 26, 1898; died in Hollywood, California, July 11, 1937 OVERTURE TO STRIKE UP THE BAND (ARR. BY MAURICE PERESS) Composed in 1927; 9 minutes

"We don't know what we're fighting for, but we didn't know the last time," is how George M. Kaufman introduces the satirical war song, "Strike up the Band." Produced twice, the show was about starting a war with Switzerland — over cheese in the 1927 original and over chocolate in the 1930 version. It introduced several standards: the duet "The Man (the Girl) I Love," "Soon" and "I've Got a Crush on You."

Gershwin often organized and orchestrated the overtures to his Broadway shows himself. This explains why the Overture to Strike Up the Band appears in the vocal score in short score format.

The actual orchestration has not survived, but Maestro Peress was fortunate to lead a reconstruction of the show in 1984, and his orchestration borrows licks and instrumentation from a film of Gershwin at the piano rehearsing the show and a contemporary recording of many of the tunes by the original *Strike Up the Band* pit band, which was led by Red Nichols and included such future superstars as Benny Goodman, Glenn Miller, Gene Krupa, Jimmy Dorsey and Jack Teagarden.

- Vince Giordano & Maurice Peress

## George Gershwin

PIANO CONCERTO IN F (FERDE GROFÉ VERSION FOR JAZZ BAND, RECONSTRUCTED AND ARR. BY VINCE GIORDANO AND MAURICE PERESS)

Composed in 1925; 31 minutes

On Sunday, February 12, 1924, one of the most memorable concerts in the history of American music introduced George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, with the composer as the piano soloist. The jazzy quasi-concerto for piano and instrumental ensemble had been commissioned by the popular conductor Paul Whiteman especially for this concert, which Whiteman had entitled "An Experiment in Modern Music." His usual dance band ensemble, augmented for the occasion, shared the Aeolian Hall stage with Gershwin for this premier performance.

To that concert Whiteman had shrewdly invited many of New York's most prominent citizens, including influential figures in society and the arts. Along with Jascha Heifetz, Fritz Kreisler, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Leopold Stokowski, Deems Taylor, Fannie Hurst, Alma Gluck and Mary Garden, the "Experiment" audience included the esteemed music director and conductor of the New York Symphony Society, Walter Damrosch (1862–1950). As a result of his enthusiasm for *Rhapsody in Blue*, Damrosch immediately commissioned

Gershwin to compose a new work for piano and orchestra to be performed with his New York Symphony Orchestra at Carnegie Hall the following year.

Even as Gershwin was swept up in new concert performances occasioned by the success of *Rhapsody in Blue*, and while also fulfilling contracts for three new Broadway musicals, he was able to complete the Damrosch commission in time for its premiere on December 3, 1925. With the Concerto in F, which Gershwin had called "New York Concerto", he began to orchestrate and score his own compositions, a monumental task that he fulfilled to the very end of his life, with the score for *Porgy and Bess*.

In the 18-month interval between commission and performance, Gershwin intensified his dedication to learning as much as possible about composing a piano concerto and scoring effectively for orchestra. He had the completed score ready for a private rehearsal in November 1925, when he hired a 55-piece orchestra to play through the work at the Globe Theater, Walter Damrosch attended the rehearsal and offered suggestions. At the Carnegie Hall premiere in December Gershwin performed in front of the full New York Symphony Orchestra. At Paul Whiteman's invitation, Ferde Grofé subsequently arranged the work for piano and jazz band, as well as for Whiteman's Concert Orchestra, which recorded the work in 1928 for Columbia Records.

With the solo piano, the Grofé score calls for an unusually large pairing of jazz band brasses and saxophones with massed violins. The saxophonists also "doubled" on the entire family of symphonic woodwinds. The fire and zest of the work is heightened by a rhythm section: tuba, banjo, rhythm piano and celeste; and percussion, pedal timpani, traps, bells, wood block, cymbals, triangle and gong.

Gershwin infused the concerto's traditional elements—the three-movement structure and the formal introduction of main themes and development sections—with the sounds and spontaneity of jazz. An extended orchestral introduction begins the concerto, after which the piano enters with its own strong motive that pervades the movement. A climax wherein piano

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and orchestra proclaim the theme is followed by a flashy cadenza.

The bluesy second movement features the trumpet and clarinets prominently. The English horn picks up the theme and leads the movement to a quiet conclusion. The Allegro agitato finale of the concerto borrows heavily from the ragtime style that Gershwin knew so intimately, and it features new material while weaving in themes from the previous two movements.

Walter Damrosch had understood Gershwin's enormous talent. Although the Concerto in F did not achieve the great immediate success of the *Rhapsody*, Damrosch deserves great credit for providing Gershwin with the impetus to stretch himself and to grow in his compositional skills at a crucial time in his life.

- Sandra Hyslop



The Paul Whiteman Orchestra at Aeolian Hall, 1924

## George Gershwin

"THAT CERTAIN FEELING" - "I GOT RHYTHM" (TRANS. BY VINCE GIORDANO)

Composed 1930 and 1925; 12 minutes

George Gershwin wrote his first song in 1916 at age 18. His prodigious talent fueled the creation of an astonishing body of songs — more than 500 — written largely (but not entirely) with his lyricist brother Ira for his own stage works, for musicals written by others, for films, and as stand-alone pieces. Still vigorously composing for the stage and film in his 30s, Gershwin would surely have continued this shower of musical gems had he not suffered a shocking death from a brain tumor in July 1937.

Two fine examples of Gershwin's work are "I Got Rhythm," from the 1930 musical *Girl Crazy*, and "That Certain Feeling," first heard in the musical comedy *Tip-toes* on December 28, 1925, exactly one month after he had performed the dress rehearsal of Concerto in F in the same venue, the Liberty Theatre.

- Sandra Hyslop

## George Gershwin

RHAPSODY IN BLUE (FERDE GROFÉ VERSION FOR JAZZ BAND)
Composed in 1924; 17 minutes

On Sunday, February 12, 1924, concert-goers set forth in New York City with some curiosity to hear the new music offered on the day's matinee. Just before the 3 pm curtain time in Aeolian Hall, orchestra musicians and conductor Paul Whiteman took a last look at their under-rehearsed, ink-still-wet scores. No one involved in this performance — not even Paul Whiteman, that optimistic champion of jazz music — could have predicted the significance of this event.

Paul Whiteman (1890–1967), an Americanborn bandleader trained in European music, began his career as a violist in the symphony orchestras of Denver and San Francisco. By 1920, thanks to his excellent musicianship, his gregarious personality and an extraordinary sense for entrepreneurial undertakings, Whiteman had achieved fame on both sides of the Atlantic. His orchestras and dance bands were in demand from Los Angeles to London.

The New York-born George Gershwin absorbed the dance and the song cultures

of early-20th century America, along with the rich concert traditions of Europe, from Beethoven to Debussy, that were so ubiquitous in the Manhattan culture of his youth. Growing up amid the Jewish immigrant population in lower Manhattan and learning piano on the job as a publisher's apprentice in Tin Pan Alley, Gershwin was surrounded by the popular music of his time, even as he made numerous attempts at formal studies of piano and music theory.

Gershwin's immersion in the rich musical culture of post-World War I America, the era that came to be known as the "Jazz Age," occurred at the same time that the music of African Americans began to migrate from the hidden places of the slave culture. To the shock of refined church folks, jazzy music emerged from the night-time shadows, back alleys and juke joints into the bright light of social acceptance.

Whiteman actively sought out African American bands and their leaders (Duke Ellington, Fletcher Henderson, Louis Armstrong and others), who inspired him

in the repertoire and styles of his own ensembles. Believing that European- and African-based music could be amalgamated, Whiteman distilled a style that he called "orchestral jazz." He determined to perform it, by the full light of day, in a formal concert hall setting.

Whiteman engaged one of New York City's prime concert stages, the 1,100-seat Aeolian Hall, which heretofore had presented such illustrious concert artists as Sergei Rachmaninoff, Sergei Prokofiev and the New York Symphony Orchestra. Calling his concert "An Experiment in Modern Music," he carefully planned the concert program to include both familiar and new works.

The band would perform Whiteman's own arrangements of familiar tunes, such as Edward MacDowell's "To a Wild Rose" and Rudolf Friml's "Donkey Serenade." Then, to reinforce audience acceptance of his experiment in music, he chose the popular, successful composer Victor Herbert to provide one of the new pieces. The 25-year-old George Gershwin had begun to achieve some renown as a song composer for Broadway and as a pianist admired for his extraordinary technique and exciting improvisations. Knowing that Gershwin had a real affinity for music without borders, and that he also had ambitions to compose for the concert hall and opera stage, Whiteman boldly commissioned him to write "a jazz piece for piano and orchestra."

Gershwin had commenced work in January 1924 and was barely ready with his *Rhapsody in Blue* by February 12. As the soloist in front of the orchestra on that day, Gershwin played from a score that was only half-notated. Like Mozart and Beethoven, who had also performed new keyboard concertos before they were completely finished, Gershwin improvised much of his performance. What Gershwin actually played that afternoon can only be known if the echoes absorbed by the walls of the Aeolian Hall could be awakened.

The Whiteman band orchestrator, Ferde Grofé (who would later expand the *Rhapsody* score to encompass a full symphony orchestra, the version most often heard today), had had time to write out only the orchestral parts, using Gershwin's

original two-piano score. For the *Rhapsody* Whiteman had augmented his dance band with extra instruments, including eight violins and a string bass. The enormously popular "novelty" pianist Zez Confrey was a featured soloist, seated at a grand piano within the band.

What the audience heard that day was a mini-concerto, a compact piece, structured around several major themes, all based upon a blues scale - characterized by a lowered seventh and a mix of major and minor thirds. The opening clarinet glissando became the unmistakable signature of the piece. Gershwin had originally notated that opening phrase as a lengthy trill followed by an ascending chromatic scale. In the rehearsal the clarinetist had playfully swooped up the scale, sliding into it with a bravura that appealed to Gershwin, and so it remained ever after. That upward slide and several other principal themes from the opening measures are woven together neatly to create the whole. The work begins and ends in the key of B-flat, modulating frequently and quickly through other keys. The Rhapsody features ragtime and other jazzy dance rhythms, with a great deal of rubato pushing and pulling the phrases and contributing to the improvisatory feeling of the work.

As the penultimate work on the concert, the *Rhapsody* was followed by the finale, Edward Elgar's Pomp and Circumstance No. 1. Composed in 1901, the march was already a well-known valedictory number that sent the audience away humming familiar music.

Breaking new ground, the *Rhapsody in Blue* naturally drew antagonistic responses from many members of the critical profession. However, it achieved instant popular acclaim. It has outlasted the criticism by touching the ineffable essence of beauty in music, beyond categories, and by showing dramatically how the music of many cultures coalesced in New York in the 1920s and emerged as uniquely American.

- Sandra Hyslop

# Meet THE Artists

Grammy Award winner and New York native Vince Giordano formed his band, the Nighthawks in 1976.
Together they have played in New York nightclubs; appeared in films such as The Cotton Club, The Aviator, Finding Forrester and Revolutionary Road; presented concerts at The Town Hall, Jazz at Lincoln Center, Newport Jazz Festival and Magic Mountain; and performed at 92Y on the Jazz in

July and Lyrics & Lyricists series for the past three decades. They can be heard every Monday and Tuesday at Iguana New York, located at 240 W. 54th St.

In 2011 they performed an original score accompanying Buster Keaton's silent film *The Cameraman* at the historic Egyptian Theatre in Hollywood for the Turner Classic Movies Film Festival.

In 2012 Vince Giordano and the Nighthawks won a Grammy Award for Best Compilation Soundtrack for Visual Media for their work on Boardwalk Empire, Volume 1 - Music from the HBO Original Series; they can be both seen and heard on the series, performing with such vocalists as Elvis Costello, Patti Smith, Regina Spektor, Leon Redbone, Liza Minnelli, Catherine Russell and Rufus Wainwright. Mr. Giordano and his band have also recorded for Terry Zwigoff's Ghost World, Tamara Jenkins's The Savages, Robert DeNiro's The Good Shepherd, Sam Mendes's Away We Go,



Photo credit: Steve Friedman

Michael Mann's Public Enemies, and John Krokidas's feature debut, Kill Your Darlings, along with HBO's "Grey Gardens" and "Mildred Pierce."

The band's most recent recording projects are HBO's "Bessie," starring Queen Latifah, which premiered this past May; and Cinemax's "The Knick," starring Clive Owen. Upcoming projects include Todd Haynes's Carol; a Barry Levinson film

for HBO, Wizard of Lies, starring Robert DeNiro and Michelle Pfeiffer; and a Woody Allen movie. The Nighthawks are also seen and heard in the USA Network series "Royal Pains" and in the PBS series "Michael Feinstein's American Songbook." Hudson West Productions recently completed a feature documentary titled Vince Giordano — There's a Future in the Past.

More than a performer and bandleader, Mr. Giordano is a renowned historian and collector of big-band music. His interest was sparked when he discovered a slew of 78 rpm records in his grand-mother's attic. He has since amassed a renowned collection of more than 60,000 band arrangements, 1920s and '30s films, 78 recordings and Jazz-Age memorabilia. He studied with such major figures from the period as Paul Whiteman's legendary arranger Bill Challis and drummer Chauncey Morehouse, as well as bassist Joe Tarto. His website is www.vincegiordano.com



# VINCE GIORDANO and the NIGHTHAWKS ORCHESTRA

ADRIAN CUNNINGHAM: saxophones, clarinet, flute, piccolo

MARK LOPEMAN: saxophones, clarinet, piccolo

**DENNIS JOSEPH:** saxophones, clarinet

ALEX YU: E-flat clarinet, B-flat bass clarinet, alto sax\*

ANDREW SHREEVES: heckelphone, oboe, clarinet, English horn, saxophones\*

KEITH KREINDLER: bassoon, saxophones, clarinet\*

COLIN BRIGSTOCKE: trumpet
JON-ERIK KELLSO: trumpet
FRANK HUBER: trumpet \*

JIM FRYER: trombone

WAYNE GOODMAN: trombone, bass trombone\*

DANIEL LEVINE: bass trombone\*
PETER DELGROSSO: French horn\*

ALEJANDRO SALAVERRY: French horn\*

PETER YARIN: piano, celeste FRANK VIGNOLA: banjo

VINCE GIORDANO: string bass, tuba, bass sax

TOMOYA AOMORI: string bass\*

PAUL WELLS: percussion
ED GONZALES: percussion\*

**ANDREW STEIN:** concertmaster

JON WEBER, CATHERINE LAWLOR, BLANCA GONZALES,

MONICA RE MARTIN, STEPHAN FILLARE: violin\*

MELANIE BONICH, ALEX WEN: violin/viola\*

\* GUEST ARTIST

Ted Rosenthal is one of the leading jazz pianists of his generation. He actively tours worldwide with his trio and as a soloist, and he has performed with many jazz greats, including Gerry Mulligan, Art Farmer, Phil Woods, Bob Brookmeyer and James Moody.

Winner of the 1988 Thelonious Monk International Jazz Piano Competition, Mr. Rosenthal has released 15 CDs as a leader. Among his most recent releases, his Rhapsody in Gershwin, which was released last year, features his arrangement of Rhapsody in Blue for

jazz trio and reached No. 1 in jazz album sales at iTunes and Amazon. Wonderland (2013) was selected as a New York Times holiday pick and received much critical praise. Impromptu (2010) showcases his reimaginings of classical themes for jazz trio. Rosenthal's solo album, The 3 B's, received 4 stars from DownBeat magazine. It features renditions of the music of Bud Powell and Bill Evans, and his improvisations on Beethoven themes.

Mr. Rosenthal is artistic director of Jazz at the Riverdale Y and previously was artistic director of Jazz at Dicapo Theatre, both in New York City. He has also performed with Wynton Marsalis and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, The Vanguard Jazz Orchestra, and Jon Faddis and the Carnegie Hall Jazz Band. In addition, Mr. Rosenthal is the pianist of choice for many top jazz vocalists including Helen Merrill, Ann Hampton Callaway and Barbara Cook. He appeared on Marian McPartland's "Piano Jazz" on National Public Radio and performed with David Sanborn on NBC's "Night Music."

In 2014 Mr. Rosenthal performed Rhapsody in Blue at Town Hall in a concert celebrating the 90th anniversary of its premiere. His orchestral performances include solo and featured appearances with



The Boston Pops, the Rochester Philharmonic and the Detroit, Fort Worth, Grand Rapids and Pittsburgh symphonies.

A recipient of three grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, Mr. Rosenthal regularly performs and records his compositions, which include jazz tunes and large-scale works. He has also composed music for dance, including *Uptown*, for the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. *The Survivor*, a concerto for piano and orchestra, has been performed by the Manhattan Jazz Philharmonic and the Rockland Symphony, with Mr. Rosenthal at the piano. In 2011, he premiered his second jazz piano concerto, "Jazz Fantasy," with The Park Avenue Chamber Symphony in New York City.

Mr. Rosenthal received his bachelor's and master's degrees from the Manhattan School of Music. Active in jazz education, he is on the faculty of the Manhattan School of Music and The Juilliard School. In addition, he presents jazz clinics throughout the world, often in conjunction with his touring. Mr. Rosenthal was a contributing editor for Piano and Keyboard magazine and has published piano arrangements and feature articles for Piano Today, The Piano Stylist and The Juilliard Journal. His website is tedrosenthal.com

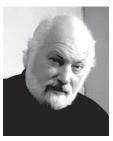


Photo: John Pole

**During his long** career Maurice Peress worked closely with two iconic figures in American music. He served as an assistant conductor to Leonard Bernstein at the New York Philharmonic, conducting the

world premiere of Bernstein's Mass at the Kennedy Center's inaugural concert. For Duke Ellington, Mr. Peress premiered the musical Queenie Pie and orchestrated the Suite from Black, Brown and Beige,

and he is the editor of Ellington's symphonic works.

Mr. Peress was music director of three American orchestras before he joined the faculty at the Aaron Copland School of Music at CUNY-Queens College. He is the author of Dvořák to Duke Ellington, published by Oxford University Press, and a recently published memoir, Maverick Maestro, for Paradigm and Routledge Press. There he writes of a life-long commitment to "give concerts that reconstruct delicious mixed marriages of music, black and white, Jazz and classical, folk and concert. Native American and European: works that bring people together, that urge us to love one another."

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CLASS: SUN, APR 3, 2:30 PM CONCERT: WED, APR 6, 7:30 PM

In the class, Louis Rosen explores how Beethoven blurred the boundaries between sonata and fantasia. At the concert, pianist Kirill Gerstein performs the "Moonlight" Sonata and other fantasias by Liszt, Rachmaninoff, and others.



CLASS: SUN, APR 17, 2:30 PM CONCERT: WED, APR 20, 7:30 PM

In the class, Louis Rosen examines the essential forms of the string quartet that Haydn established. At the concert, the St. Lawrence String Quartet performs an "Apponyi" Quartet and a chamber version of a "London" symphony, with guests.

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