

Marina del Rey Summer Concerts

presents

THE MARINA DEL REY SUMMER SYMPHONY

Frank Fetta,
Music Director and Conductor

Featuring

Claire Huangci, piano

Arthur Honegger, *Pacific 231*

Maurice Ravel, *Piano Concerto for the Left Hand*, Claire Huangci – piano

Pyotr Tchaikovsky, *Romeo & Juliet Overture Fantasy*, Claire Huangci – piano

George Gershwin, *Rhapsody in Blue*, Claire Huangci - piano

Thursday, August 18, 2011, 7:00 pm

Burton Chace Park
13650 Mindanao Way, Marina del Rey, CA 90292

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The Marina del Rey Summer Symphony

The Marina del Rey Summer Symphony, conducted by its Music Director Frank Fetta, has scored a great success since the inception of these free waterside concerts at Burton Chace Park with a pilot concert in the summer of 2000. For these concerts, the orchestra emphasizes performances of the late 19th century and 20th century symphonic repertoire. The orchestra is pleased to welcome, for the fifth year, its Media Sponsor, KUSC Classical FM 91.5.

The Symphony's parent orchestra, the Culver City Symphony Orchestra, with its Music Director Frank Fetta, has just completed its 48th winter season. In addition to a regular schedule of concerts at the Veterans' Memorial Auditorium in Culver City, the orchestra makes guest appearances at other venues and at various radio, festival and film projects. It sponsors the annual Parness Young Artist Concerto Competition, which has launched many talented musicians on the road to success in the classical music world.

Maestro Frank Fetta

Maestro Frank Fetta has been Conductor and Music Director of the Marina del Rey Summer Symphony since the inception of the Marina del Rey Summer Concerts in 2000.

In addition to his post with the Marina concerts, Maestro Fetta is permanent conductor of the Culver City Symphony Orchestra, the Torrance Symphony, and the Redlands Bowl Music Festival. He is also principal conductor of the Nevada Opera Theatre and serves as conductor of the prestigious Loren L. Zachary Society National Vocal Competition. He is much in demand as a guest conductor; among the orchestras he has led are those of San Francisco, San Diego, Oakland, Pasadena, San Bernardino, Honolulu, and Riverside, as well as the Debut Orchestra of the Young Musicians Foundation and the United Chinese Musicians Orchestra.

Maestro Fetta's multi-faceted career has associated him with the Carmel Bach Festival, the Metropolitan Opera National Council, Music Academy of the West, Chautauqua Institute, and Columbia Artists' Community Concerts. He has conducted for such stellar artists as Leila Josefowicz, Beverly Sills, Anna Maria Alberghetti, Daniel Rodriguez, Jerome Hinds, Dame Rita Hunter, Xue Wei, Eugene Fodor, Julian Lloyd Webber, Ruby Hinds, Suzanna Guzmán, Rita Coolidge, Louis Leberherz, Eduardo Villa, Giorgio Tozzi, Mona Golabek, John Novacek, Vikki Carr, Lorna Luft, Cleo Laine, and Julianna Di Giacomo.

Frank Fetta also maintains an active teaching schedule in conducting and in operatic and song literature, and serves as organist/pianist at Corpus Christi Church in Pacific Palisades. Those who have followed his career agree that Frank Fetta richly merits the praise afforded him by the Los Angeles Times, which called him a conductor of "passion, wit, admirable theatrical sensitivity, and an interpretative individuality often extraordinarily mesmerizing." He is married to the inventor-artist Susan Henninger and they are the parents of a son, Raphael, an actor who works and lives with his wife and son in New York.

Claire Huangci

Born in Rochester, New York, 20-year-old pianist Claire Huangci astonishes all who hear her perform. Coming from a family of scientists, Claire received a grand piano for her 6th year birthday present. After exploring the instrument herself in the first year, she started taking lessons when she was 7. And in the same year, she was featured on FOX news as a child prodigy with “the skills of a professional pianist.”

During her studies, Claire was awarded with a number of scholarships and won many competitions, including the Grand Prize at 1999 World Piano Competition. As a result, she performed in the gala concert with the World Festival Orchestra in Cincinnati Ohio and in a winner’s concert at Carnegie Hall. Continuing her studies at the Curtis Institute of Music, she went on to win the Philadelphia Orchestra Competition and performed with the Philadelphia Orchestra under the baton of Wolfgang Sawallisch, one of dozens of American orchestras she has appeared with.

In April 2006, Claire won the first prize in the 57th Kosciuszko Chopin International Piano Competition in New York City. She then performed in numerous solo recitals and concerto appearances throughout the USA. The 2006 Hamamatsu International Piano Competition introduced Claire to the Japanese audiences; she was awarded the Diploma of Outstanding Merit and was the favorite for many spectators.

The 2007 season represents a milestone in Claire Huangci’s career. She made her first appearances in Europe with solo performances in Munich (Herkulesaal), Frankfurt, Leipzig (Gewandhaus), and Paris (Salle Cortot). In addition, Claire gave her debut with China Philharmonic. In April, she toured Switzerland and Germany, performing Prokofiev’s Piano Concerto No. 2 with Südwestdeutsche Philharmonie. From 2008, Claire appears in solo and concerto performances at various venues and festivals all over the world, amongst others to Vienna Konzerthaus, Mozarteum Salzburg, Carnegie Hall, Kimmel Center, Aspen Festival, Chopin Duszniaki Festival, Kissinger Sommer, Schwetzingen Festspiele, and Yokohama Music Festival.

Claire’s 2009-10 season opened with Grieg’s Piano Concerto at the Tonhalle Zurich with the Tchaikovsky Symphony Orchestra of Moscow under the baton of Vladimir Fedosyev. She appeared in further concerts throughout Europe, the United States and Asia, including a China tour with the Radio-Sinfonieorchester Stuttgart under Sir Roger Norrington, during which she performed Prokofiev’s Piano Concerto No. 3 at the opening of the Shanghai Expo. Appearances during the current season include such prestigious concert halls as the Konzerthaus Berlin, Gasteig Munich, Tivoli Copenhagen or in Eastern Europe the Smetana Hall Prague, Slovenian Philharmonie and Slovak National Theater. Having won the International Chopin-Competition in Darmstadt/Germany in October 2009, she was awarded the first prize at the National Chopin Piano Competition of the United States in March 2010 again for her distinguished Chopin interpretations.

Claire Huangci currently continues her music education in Germany at the Hannover Hochschule für Musik with Arie Vardi. She is sponsored by the Orpheum Foundation for the advancement of young soloists.

THE PROGRAM

Arthur Honegger, *Pacific 231*

Many composers find solace and inspiration in Nature. Some, like Arthur Honegger (Mar. 10, 1892 - Nov. 27, 1955) find it as a gear-head and in things mechanical. Honegger, one of the more successful composers of the 20th Century, was Swiss-French and first studied violin and harmony at the Zurich Conservatory. He then studied at the Paris Conservatory which required a twice weekly commute by train, and as a train enthusiast for Honegger this was no hardship. Other passions of his were rugby and fast cars, with special attention given later in life to his Bugati. At the Paris Conservatory he studied violin, counterpoint and fugue (he is considered one of the great contrapuntalists of the 20th Century), orchestration, conducting and history. Among his fellow students were Ibert and Milhaud. He became friends with both.

Honegger was also a member of the influential composers group, Les Six, whose modus operandi was a reaction against the music of Wagner and Impressionistic Music. The six were Auric, Durey, Honegger, Milhaud, Poulenc and Tailleferre.

An early liaison with soprano Claire Croiza resulted with the birth of a son. He later married pianist Andree "Vaura" Vaurabourg in 1926. She was a superb pianist and a highly regarded teacher of harmony, counterpoint and fugue. Pierre Boulez was one of her students. She championed her husband's works, and accompanied him on tours. These tours may have been some of the few periods of unaccustomed closeness - Honegger required solitude to compose, and though married, he kept a house separate from his wife. They did live together shortly after Vaurabourg was seriously injured in a car accident. They had one daughter, Pascale.

Pacific 231

The catalog of his works is extensive, with large scale works in great number. His compositions include a great number of ballets; incidental music; operas; four symphonies; chamber music; oratorios-with "Jeanne d'Arc du Bucher" the most prominent; film scores-three with Abel Gance including "Napolean"; concertos; and three "Symphonic Movements" of which Pacific 231 is the most famous.

While Honegger stated that the initial thought was to write an exercise of building momentum while the tempo slows, he titled the work Pacific 231 after it was composed. Train enthusiast Honegger is quoted, "I have always loved locomotives passionately. For me they are living creatures and I love them as others love women or horses."

Trains, like all things mechanical, are categorized and classified. A Pacific is a class of steam locomotive, but usually designated 4-6-2: four pilot wheels, six driving wheels and two trailing wheels. But since we're dealing with a French classification, they count axles instead of wheels, so in the French system the Pacific has an axle configuration of 2-3-1.

Maurice Ravel, *Piano Concerto for the Left Hand*

A student composer with distinction in studies, stellar academic achievements and the ability to win prizes does not guarantee their works will gain success in the composer's lifetime, or should success in their lifetime occur, it does not mean their works will remain in repertoire after the composer's death. Maurice Ravel (Mar. 7, 1875 - Dec. 28, 1937) was not a distinguished student, and a failure in competitions, yet he is considered one the greatest composers of the early 20th Century. He was born in Ciboure, Basses-Pyrenees, whose father was of Swiss heritage and his mother Basque. His engineer/inventor father favored Ravel's younger brother, Edouard, while Maurice had a deeply felt relationship with his mother, Marie (Delouart) Ravel. After the family moved to Paris, Joseph Ravel could see that Maurice possessed remarkable musical talents. Despite his lesser affection for Maurice, he nevertheless started his son on early piano and harmony lessons.

Ravel would gain entry to the Paris Conservatory at age fourteen for piano studies, but was such an undistinguished student that he was dismissed. He reentered in 1897 and studied with the preeminent composer Faure. But he was eventually also dismissed from the composition class. Yet, his compositions around this time gained widespread acceptance, particularly the piano work *Pavanne pour une infante detunte* (*Pavanne for a Dead Princess*), a title not for any particular young princess but just an alliterate title thought up by the composer. Additional, well received piano works were composed, along with works which already placed Ravel in the upper echelon of French composers: the piano work *Jeux d'eau* and the *String Quartet*.

Somehow, the Parisian musical establishment could not see, nor hear, the importance of these works. Perhaps Ravel exhibited an overt dislike of the Parisian musical establishment, and they could not overcome their personal bias towards Ravel to appreciate his works. Adding to Ravel's anti Parisian musical establishment leanings was around 1902 with membership into an avant-garde group of artists, and musicians known as the "Apaches." Europe has a long held fascination with the American West, and one can only assume that the Parisian Apaches adopted this title as an added honor to their cachet as renegade outsiders. At Ravel's suggestion, the first theme of Borodin's 2nd Symphony was chosen as their signature tune. The Apaches would meet regularly on Saturdays, first at the home of Paul Sordes, in rue Dulong in Montmartre, or at that of Tristan Klingsor in avenue du Parc-Montsouris, and later in the studio of Maurice Delage, in rue de Civry in Auteil. Various members of the group became longtime friends of Ravel.

The Prix de Rome is the most coveted, and perhaps notorious, artistic prize in France. Established in 1663 initially for painters and sculptors, it was the rite of success for French composers to become a Prix de Rome winner, and spend eighteen months in Rome to mature as an artist. Ravel, keeping in line as a perceived underachiever, failed to win after five attempts. The last rejection was after Ravel was already a successful, well received composer (he was weak in the fugue was a competition critique). This rejection was so controversial that the entire prix administration was reorganized. When World War I broke out, Ravel made several attempts to enlist in the air force as a pilot, but was refused on health grounds. Eventually, in March 1916, he became a driver in the motor ambulance corps, naming his

vehicle Adelaide after his ballet. His letters describe some of the dangerous missions he undertook: he would drive to the front to pick up wounded soldiers, and witnessed the worst of the horrors of war. But he soon became frustrated at not being able to compose. He was also concerned about being so far away from his mother. In September 1916 he became seriously ill with dysentery, and while he was recuperating in Paris his mother died suddenly in January 1917. With his emotional bedrock gone, Ravel was desolate. There has been speculation about Ravel's private life, but it seems certain that his relationship with his mother was the closest emotional attachment he ever experienced. From this period came the piano suite *Le tombeau de Couperin*, which Ravel termed as an ode to French music, with the pieces based on French dances. In a reflection of the time, each movement of the suite is dedicated to a friend of Ravel's who died in the war.

Ravel's piano music is some of the most ravishing, and difficult, in the repertoire. Moreover, he was a master orchestrator in either smaller chamber orchestras or huge symphonic forces. He never composed a proper symphony, but his orchestra works (original orchestra works or transcriptions), and ballet music, remain a mainstay of orchestra, along with his two piano concertos, and his violin solo and orchestra *Tzigane* with its gypsy influences. He was prolific transcribing his own works from piano to orchestra, and works of others, with particular brilliance achieved with Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*. Indeed, it seems he wrote original piano works with the intent to later orchestrate them, such as *Le tombeau de Couperin*, *Ma Mere l'oye* (Mother Goose), *Rapsodie Espagnol*, *Alborada del gracioso* and *Valses nobles et sentimentales*.

The works originally composed for orchestra are the two suites for the ballet *Oaphnis et Chloe*, *La Valse*, and undoubtedly his most famous work, orchestral or otherwise, *Bolero*. *Bolero* was written as ballet music (rarely performed as such), and as an exercise in creating variety within an incessant rhythm beaten out in one meter, 3/4, in a steady tempo. According to a possibly apocryphal story, at the premiere a woman shouted that Ravel was mad. When told about this, Ravel smiled and remarked that she had understood the piece. *Bolero* generates the highest royalties of any French composer, and the work is still under French copyright until 2015. The French music tradition was a seminal influence on Ravel despite his less than stellar academic record. He was greatly influenced, along with Debussy, by his hearing of Javanese gamelan music at the 1889 Paris World Exhibition. Jazz was another influence on his works, which put him squarely outside the French academics which increased the hostility between the two. While called an Impressionist composer along with Debussy, it is a term both composers had difficulty with. Ravel's wide variety of influences, and his keen sense of structure also made him a leader of the anti-Romantic style of music. In Romanticism emotion trumps reason and structure. The idea of being guided by reason of the Enlightenment of the Classical Period, however much it is veiled in Ravel's works, is another influence.

The compositional process for Ravel was meticulous and secretive. Works would only appear only after their completion, and were rarely revised. They emerged whole-cloth, with the detritus of the hours of care and hard work behind them not seen. For a while, Stravinsky and Ravel lived down the road from each other in Clarens, Switzerland. The ever observant Stravinsky wittily called Ravel the little Swiss watch maker. Today Ravel is revered as a master,

whose works draw the listener into a sound-world both fantastical and highly-structured, while to some detractors his music barely rises above salon style. Luckily for those of us who revere Ravel, performances of his works continue, and they continue to cast their spells.

Piano Concerto for the Left Hand

The effects of World War I would never leave Ravel, and were partial cause of his death. The illnesses he suffered from the war resurfaced starting in the late 1920's, with what Ravel called cerebral amnesia and continuing insomnia. In the mid-1930's he could no longer sign his name, and communication became increasingly difficult. He died after a brain surgery.

Another victim of the affects of World War I was Viennese pianist Paul Wittgenstein (Nov. 5, 1887 - Mar. 3, 1961) who lost his right arm during the war after being shot in the elbow by the Russians on an assault on Poland. The elder brother of philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, the Wittgenstein household was funded by the father, industrialist Karl Wittgenstein, and was frequented by many notable artists and musicians, including Johannes Brahms, Gustav Mahler and Richard Strauss. After his recovery from the loss of his arm, he devised techniques to perform piano works previously not capable for a five fingered pianist. He then approached composers, asking them to write material for him to perform as a left handed pianist. Among those he approached were Benjamin Britten, Paul Hindemith, Erich Wolfgang Korngold, Sergei Prokofiev, Franz Schmidt, Richard Strauss and Maurice Ravel. All composed works for him, but he did not perform all. Prokofiev's work was not comprehensible to him, and Hindemith's work was so annoying to Wittgenstein that he hid it in his study and it was not discovered until 2002.

Structurally, the Ravel Piano Concerto for the Left Hand has been classified as a single movement; as two movements linked together so there is no pause; or a three-part work played without pause in a Slow-Fast-Slow form. It is definitely a concerto due to the demands placed upon the soloist. The work seems to be a summing up of Ravel's life in music. It contains quick glimpses and references to earlier works. Bolero and its echoes pass through, and towards the end, the Dies Irae, the chant from the Catholic Requiem Mass, is inferred. Wittgenstein gave the premiere January 5, 1932, with Robert Heger conducting the Vienna Symphony Orchestra.

-Matthew Hetz Los Angeles, 2011

Pyotr Tchaikovsky, *Romeo and Juliet* Overture-Fantasy

The son of an inspector of mines in the Urals, Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (May 7, 1840 - Nov. 6, 1893) at an early age displayed the fragile, high-strung sensitivity that was to characterize his whole life. Provided with a French governess and, from age five, a private piano teacher, the young Tchaikovsky was well educated, but he showed no special talent for music. Trained at St. Petersburg's School of Jurisprudence, he took a position as clerk in the Ministry of Justice when he was nineteen. He has been described as "a very bad civil servant even in that paradise of bad civil servants." In 1861 he began lessons in composition with Nicholas Zarembo and entered the St. Petersburg Conservatory, where he came under the influence of the great pianist, composer

and teacher Anton Rubinstein. Despite a serious reversal of his family's fortunes, Tchaikovsky left his position at the Ministry and did well enough at his studies to receive an appointment as professor at the new Moscow Conservatory in 1866.

Tchaikovsky's musical output was very large considering his short life as a composer. His output consists of six symphonies, six operas, two symphonic fantasias, three piano concertos, the Violin Concerto, the Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture, the 1812 Overture, ballets, several serenades and cantatas, chamber music, numerous works for piano, and several dozen songs. He taught at the Moscow Conservatory, wrote criticism for the Moscow newspapers and traveled widely in Europe and the United States. He attended the first Bayreuth Festival of Wagner's music dramas in 1876, and reported on it for one of the Moscow dailies.

The financial anxiety that lay behind this hectic activity was largely eased when Tchaikovsky encountered Mme. Nadezhda von Meck, (1831-1894). In one of the more curious relationships in Music regarding a composer, she became his close confidante for thirteen years beginning in 1876, and gave him a monthly stipend. She was a Russian, birth surname of Filaretovna, who married a German engineer. They had 18 children, 11 of whom lived to adulthood. She persuaded her husband to quit his low paying government job and go into the railroad business. This was a very astute move, and through it they became wealthy. Upon her husband's sudden death in 1873, she inherited a railroad company, and great wealth. Mme. von Meck was a capable pianist and became a supporter of Music, including giving early support to Claude Debussy. She also ran a very tight household, commanding her children to follow her demands on how to live and marry. One son married a niece of Tchaikovsky, Anna. This proved a difficult marriage, and is one of the many speculations in the sudden ending by von Meck of the stipend and relationship. A more plausible explanation was the debt her family business was under, and resentment from her family in paying Tchaikovsky a very healthy annual stipend of 6,000 rubles when a government worker received around 400. The family may have also threatened von Meck with the divulgence of Tchaikovsky's homosexuality, which would have brought unwanted notice to him, and to her and her family. At her insistence, the relationship with Tchaikovsky was carried on entirely by letter. Her emotional support helped him survive his disastrous marriage in 1877, consummated in the hope of quieting the prevalent rumors of his homosexuality. The Violin Concerto of 1878 was composed as a means to recover from his ill-advised and forced marriage. By 1888 his music had brought him international celebrity.

1890 was an incendiary year. In it, Tchaikovsky produced some of his most acclaimed and greatest works: the opera *The Queen of Spades*, and the ballets *The Sleeping Beauty*, and *The Nutcracker*. Despite his worldwide recognition, he participated in the opening of Carnegie Hall in New York in 1891, pessimism and depression hung onto him. His final work, the Sixth Symphony, *Petnetique*, is a profoundly emotional work. The searing last movement is the composer's contemplation of death - he died in controversy nine days after the premiere. The official report was by drinking cholera tainted waters, but more recent biographers imply he committed suicide by trial in an "honor court" resulting from his homosexuality.

Tchaikovsky's works have remained a concert favorite, never lacking for performances. He is revered in Russia (Stravinsky said one of his greatest days was when as a youth he glimpsed Tchaikovsky in a crowd.), England and the United States.

Romeo and Juliet, Fantasy Overture

For a work which can sound so spontaneous and put forth such emotions, it is remarkable that it went through two re-writes to arrive at the third version, the standard version most often performed. Tchaikovsky was in a rut, burned out from teaching, writing and composing. Attempts at a symphonic poem and opera had failed. Fellow Russian composer Balakirev critiqued the tone poem, and steered him towards Shakespeare's tragic love story. The universality of the story has an Englishman writing of young lovers in Italy, and two Russians making music about it. It seems that Balakirev was stern and strict with Tchaikovsky. He gave numerous critiques of the budding work, suggesting numerous overall changes, suggesting key signatures and structure. Numerous rewrites were sent between the two in the mail. When version one was premiered, the event was totally overshadowed by the scandal of the premiere's conductor Nikolai Rubinstein's conviction the day before of having a relationship with an underage female student. Dispirited, Tchaikovsky was ready to give up, until the pestering of Balakirev resulted in version two. This version was more structured as an overture in sonata form, and received praise from Rubinstein. Yet, Balakirev was still not satisfied. He rightly sensed that Tchaikovsky could deliver more, which he did by leaving academic niceties behind, and depending on more fantasy to tell the story:

"Two households, both alike in dignity,
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,
From ancient grudge break new mutiny,
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life,
Whose misadventured piteous overthrows
Doth with their death bury their parents strife. "

In version three, there are main themes and sections: the first is Father Laurence who tries to bind the two lovers in matrimony and heal the violence between the Montagues and Capulets. This is quasi-Russian Orthodox music. Then fight music between the two houses of Verona, with hard, striking chords and menacing scales; and the love music which some say has Romeo represented by the English Horn and Juliet in the flutes. The strings also have love music in long lined melodies. Tchaikovsky ends the work with loud, hard chords, a strong ending to the tragedy. Shakespeare, through the Prince, seems more intent in letting the world recover slowly from the death of the two, young lovers:

"A glooming peace this morning with it brings,
The sun for sorrow will not show his head.
Go hence, to have more talk of these sad things;
Some shall be pardoned, and some punished;
For never was a story of more woe
Than this of Juliet and her Romeo. "

-Matthew Hetz Los Angeles, 2011

George Gershwin, *Rhapsody in Blue*

When making lists of the most notable American Composers, George Gershwin (Sept. 26, 1898 - Jul. 11, 1937) must be on it. He was born in New York City to Russian, Jewish Immigrant parents, Gershovitz. In his youth, Gershwin was known more for his neighborhood sociability (a lifelong trait) and athleticism—he was the roller skating champ of the neighborhood. Music does not seem to have entered his life until 1910 with the arrival of a new family piano intended for George's brother, Ira. George soon commandeered the instrument. After outgrowing lessons with local teachers, Gershwin studied with Charles Hambitzer who mentored the young student with exposure to music from the Classical world. After a few years, Gershwin decided to pursue the burgeoning, and indeed incredibly fertile popular music of the United States, and in particular that coming from New York City. He dropped out of school, and became a song plugger (a piano player and singer used to demonstrate [plug] new songs) at Jerome H. Remick & Co. music publisher in Tin Pan Alley. This created his strong armed piano technique, and exposed him to the fountainhead of the American musical style.

He later became a Broadway rehearsal pianist, and began to attract notice as a song composer. In 1920 he rocketed to fame with his song *Swanee*, sung by Al Jolson, in which Gershwin received \$10,000 in composer royalties that year alone. Along came Broadway musicals, with *Lady Be Good* the first of many collaborations with his brother Ira as sole lyricist. *Lady Be Good* starred the dance team of Fred and Adele Astaire. Fred Astaire and Gershwin would become close collaborators and friends. Next came the convergence of Gershwin's Classical and Broadway/Popular Music and Jazz interests: *Rhapsody in Blue*, performed with Gershwin at the piano in the legendary February 12, 1924, Paul Whiteman concert "An Experiment in Modern Music" in New York. The premiere was attended by notables of Classical Music, Broadway and Jazz and New York Society. Gershwin had not fully notated, if indeed composed the piano part, and improvised, some say, two-thirds of the concert. The piano part was soon composed and published. Ferde Grote wrote the orchestration which was due to time constraints and not the canard that Gershwin could not orchestrate. *Rhapsody in Blue* was a revolutionary hybrid of musical styles, and established Gershwin in the musical pantheon of the United States.

He was a restless man, physically—he always played sports with tennis, ping-pong and golf on the list of activities—and artistically and intellectually. His fame spread throughout this country and through Europe meeting Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Milhaud, Poulenc, Ravel, Walton and Berg, among others and gaining their admiration. He hugely succeeded in Broadway with such musicals as *Strike Up the Band* (1927; rev. 1930), *Girl Crazy* (1930) and *Of Thee I Sing* (1931), which won a Pulitzer Prize for drama but not for music; and with a steady stream of concert works, most notably *An American in Paris*, *The Cuban Overture*, *The Piano Concerto in F* and the *Second Rhapsody*. His largest, and perhaps greatest work was *Porgy and Bess*, a "folk opera" based on the music and culture of Black Americans. To better understand the subject, he lived on an island off South Carolina for two months to immerse himself in Black Culture. The opera was greeted with a mixed reception, perhaps due to its nontraditional, nonwhite story and music, and/or jealousy for Gershwin's incredible success. American composer and critic Virgil Thompson wrote a particularly sour-faced review deriding the folkish inclinations of the opera. The sour-faced writing of Thompson seems hollower as the years progress.

Gershwin's success was truly phenomenal artistically. He easily bridged the gap between the immigrant, European Classical Music tradition and the native Black American/Jazz/Broadway/Jewish/Popular Music genres. And very remarkably, he never lost popularity. From his music he was fantastically successful, earning a fabulous amount of money in his lifetime, which could be a source of jealousy. A social and party favorite, he would play the piano for hours of entertainment. While closely associated with New York, Gershwin through his film work was well known, and admired, in Hollywood. He lived in Beverly Hills, and became friendly with local avant-garde composer Arnold Schoenberg-they played tennis together. Indeed, Gershwin also took up painting, and Schoenberg is reported to have said one of his favorite portraits of him was the one by Gershwin.

Gershwin and Ira took up residence in Beverly Hills, and George died in Los Angeles from a massive brain tumor at age thirty-eight. It was a huge shock to the nation and musical world. His last public performance was with the Los Angeles Philharmonic as pianist and conductor in a concert of his works. His home at 1019 North Roxbury Drive was purchased by singer Rosemary Clooney (George Clooney's aunt), but after her death in 2002, the City of Beverly Hills would not stop the demolition of the house for a new, larger mansion.

Gershwin's music has become an unshakable foundation of American Music. His songs remain on playlists for jazz and pop singers, and Classical Music vocalists, and are heard everywhere in film, radio and television and concert halls. Woody Allen's film Manhattan greatly benefits from Gershwin's music in it.

Rhapsody in Blue

Rhapsodies go back to the Ancient Greeks as a section of epic poems. Musically, the term covers a lot of territory, but basically it's a freely structured work, sometimes epic, heroic or nationalistic. For Gershwin, the freely structured rhapsody certainly fits his blue one, but in character, it is the extremely energetic and songful convergence of cultures, races, religions into the mix of New York City and the United States. It was the bold attempt to meld European Classical genres with American Jazz, and its Black American roots.

Gershwin was the pianist in the legendary February 12, 1924, Paul Whiteman concert "An Experiment in Modern Music" in New York. The work which shot from that concert was to become a music synonymous with American Music, a music of individual cultures mashed into one whole-cloth. It was a sensation, cloaked in controversy, when premiered. Today, Rhapsody in Blue is perhaps the calling card of American Music. From the beginning clarinet slide to the full throated, nostalgic end, each theme, each section emerges as music of the soil, and sticks in the ear. Gershwin today still divides critics, particularly from classical music. Jazz critics, keen in ears and sensibilities, seem to give more leeway and are more accepting of the novelties of melodies and form. Those holding up the ideals of Classical Music are not always so open minded. From the reviews of the premiere:

"This music is only half alive. Its gorgeous vitality of rhythm and of instrumental color is impaired by melodic and harmonic anemia of the most pernicious kind. How trite and feeble and conventional the tunes are,

how sentimental and vapid the harmonic treatment, and under the disguise of fussy and futile counterpoint!" - Lawrence Gilman, New York Tribune for February 14,1924.

But there were different voices who did not hold on so tightly to traditions-valid or not, but embraced the new:

"The audience was stirred, and many a hardened concertgoer excited with the sensation of a new talent finding its voice, and likely to say something personally and racially important to the world. A talent and an idiom, also rich in possibilities for that generally exhausted and outworn form of the classic piano concerto." - Olin Downes, The New York Times, February 17, 1924.

The work was new then, retains a newness today, and will continue to be new in the future.

Matthew Hetz, 2011 Los Angeles

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- Technical Director of the Marina del Rey Summer Concerts is James Ciancaglini
 - Chief Sound Engineer is Martyn Claes.
 - Sound, power, backline, and lighting equipment provided by Auntie M Creative Consultants.
 - Tents and stages provided by AAA Rents and Events, Van Nuys, California.
 - Chairs are available for rent at the concert site. Call Hornblower Café at (310) 823-8400 for advance rental orders.
 - Hornblower Café in the Park is open for sunset dining on concert nights, offering a varied selection of food and beverages.

We offer two methods of transportation directly to and from the concert site. The WaterBus, operating from seven locations throughout Marina del Rey, serves concert-goers exclusively on Classical Thursdays from 5 pm to midnight. On Pop Saturdays the WaterBus operates from 11 am to midnight. \$1.00 per person, each way.

You can also catch a ride on land with the free Beach Shuttle, which runs shuttle service directly to and from Chace Park on concert nights.

You can download Marina del Rey WaterBus and Beach Shuttle brochures from the Beaches and Harbors website at <http://marinadelrey.lacounty.gov>.

County Parking Lot 4, 13500 Mindanao Way, West of Admiralty Way, and County Lot 5, Bali Way, West of Admiralty Way, are open on concert nights. Fees are as posted. **Cash Only.**