

WORDS WITHOUT MUSIC

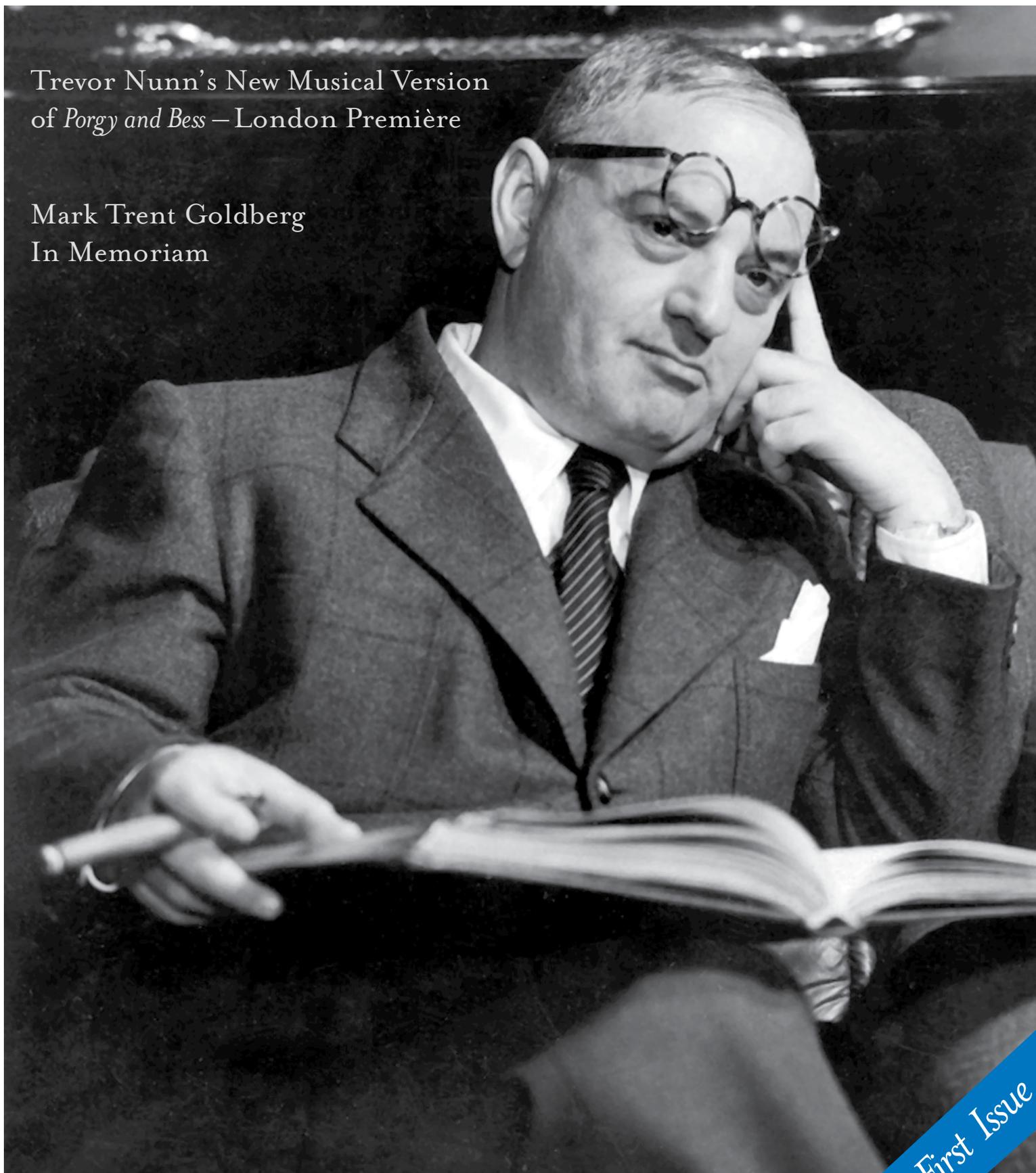
The Ira Gershwin Newsletter



No.1, January 2007

Trevor Nunn's New Musical Version
of *Porgy and Bess* – London Première

Mark Trent Goldberg
In Memoriam



First Issue

WELCOME

WORDS WITHOUT MUSIC

The Ira Gershwin Newsletter

NO. 1, JANUARY 2007

LETTER FROM MICHAEL STRUNSKY

Welcome to the first issue of **Words Without Music**, an occasional newsletter devoted to the life and work of Ira Gershwin, one of the 20th century's greatest lyricists and president of the Sweet Fellows Society, as voted upon by his friends in the Hollywood community.

My name is Michael Strunsky. Leonore Strunsky Gershwin and Ira Gershwin were my aunt and uncle. Since 1990 I have been the trustee of my aunt's estate, which owns and manages Ira's copyrights and maintains an extensive archive, created during Ira's lifetime, to perpetuate the Gershwin legacy.

After Ira's death in 1983, Lee Gershwin actively managed his estate. In fact, the series of recordings issued under the Roxbury Recordings label, in association with the Library of Congress, came about under Lee's direction and with her encouragement.

In 1987, the Ira and Leonore Gershwin Trusts were established to use Ira's royalties to provide income for the Music Division of the Library of Congress and to establish a Philanthropic Fund that endows organizations in areas such as the arts, education and medical research that were of concern to my aunt and uncle.

Lee's death in 1991 brought me more closely into the Gershwin fold. Between 1991 and 2000, the archive was located in an office on Wilshire Boulevard in Beverly Hills, set up to look very much like Ira and Lee's home on Roxbury Drive. In 2000, we moved into new quarters in downtown San Francisco.

Ira drew and painted for much of his life. The "bowing man," which we use as the Trusts' logo, was created by him and was often found at the end of his letters to friends and on personally autographed copies of his book, *Lyrics on Several Occasions*.

During his extensive career, Ira Gershwin had 62 collaborators, with whom he wrote over 700 songs. His most important collaborator, of course, was his younger brother George. He also did significant work with such composers and lyricists as Harold Arlen, Vernon Duke, E.Y. (Yip) Harburg, Jerome Kern, Burton Lane, Arthur Schwartz, Kay Swift, Kurt Weill, and Vincent Youmans.

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WHO'S WHO AT THE IRA AND LEONORE GERSHWIN TRUSTS

Leonore & Ira Gershwin, Beverly Hills, 1959. Photo: Sam Shaw.

MICHAEL STRUNSKY

Michael Strunsky, the Trustee of the Ira and Leonore Strunsky Gershwin estates, is the nephew of Ira and Leonore. He became Trustee in 1990 and has managed all business aspects of Ira Gershwin's copyrights ever since. He is also the Trustee of the two charitable Trusts established by his aunt to support various Arts, Medicine, and Jewish causes along with the Music Division of the United States Library of Congress.

ROBERT KIMBALL

Robert Kimball, Artistic Advisor to the Ira and Leonore Gershwin Trusts since 1982, is the coauthor with Alfred Simon of *The Gershwins* and editor of *The Complete Lyrics of Ira Gershwin*.

JEAN STRUNSKY

Besides her activity on behalf of the Trusts, Jean Strunsky, Vice President of Administration, is also a member of the Berkeley Repertory Theatre's board of trustees.

L.J. STRUNSKY

The Trusts' licensing and permissions work is handled by L.J. Strunsky, Director of Marketing & Communications. She is responsible for the creation of the official Gershwin website, www.gershwin.com, which has been online since 2002.

MICHAEL OWEN

Archivist Michael Owen has been in his current position with the Trusts since July 2005. He was Mark Trent Goldberg's archival assistant from 2000 to 2004; prior to that, he spent more than a decade as the Accounting Manager for the Wine Institute, an industry trade association. Michael holds a history degree from San Francisco State University.

MARTHA BUCK

Executive Assistant Martha Buck came to the Trusts in 1996. She has a degree in teacher education from the University of Texas at Austin and was on the staff of the National Food Laboratory for eleven years before joining the Gershwins.

OLIVIA SMITH

Olivia Smith has been the Trusts' bookkeeper for the past six years, having previously been employed by the Strunsky family during the years they operated Apersey Construction.

VINNY FAJARDO

Facilities Manager Vinny Fajardo has worked for the Strunsky family since 1997. From 1981 to 1999, he was Executive Chef at the Cargo Restaurant in San Francisco.

(Letter from Michael Strunsky continued)

Our newsletter's name, **Words Without Music**, comes from a beautiful ballad Ira wrote with Vernon Duke for the *Ziegfeld Follies of 1936*. We thought it was an appropriate title for a newsletter about a man of words.

The Ira and Leonore Gershwin Trusts maintain an archive of material related to Ira's career and business dealings, from the early 20th century to current productions. It is open to

qualified researchers by appointment only. The Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. also holds a significant Gershwin collection in its Music Division, located in the library's Madison Building.

We hope you enjoy this first issue. Please let us know what you think. Contact us by letter or email. Welcome again.

A TRIBUTE TO MARK TRENT GOLDBERG (1956-2005)

Mark Trent Goldberg, Executive Director of the Ira and Leonore Gershwin Trusts, died suddenly of a heart attack at age 49 on May 18, 2005. His association with the Gershwin family began in 1983, shortly before Ira Gershwin's death, when he started working part-time organizing the voluminous scrap-books Ira had compiled on his career and that of his brother George. From that assignment grew Mark's lifetime commit-



ment to the Gershwin legacy, encompassing his roles as archivist of Ira's remarkable collection of material – including music and lyric manuscripts, correspondence, programs, books, recordings, orchestrations, photographs, scripts, sheet music, and other memorabilia – and as administrator of numerous aspects of the publishing, literary, and financial worlds of the Gershwin brothers.

During his more than twenty years with the Trusts, Mark's projects included the studio cast albums issued by Roxbury Recordings of reconstructions of the Gershwin shows

Girl Crazy, *Oh, Kay!*, *Lady, Be Good!*, *Strike Up the Band*, and *Pardon My English*, as well as the New World recording of *Tip-Toes* and *Tell Me More*. He was personally responsible for the restoration of the Vernon Duke/Ira Gershwin show *Ziegfeld Follies of 1936*, which was presented by the New York City Center Encores! series and subsequently recorded by Decca Broadway. He was also involved with the 1992 Tony Award winner for Best Musical, *Crazy for You*, the centennial celebrations of Ira and George in 1996 and 1998, and the reissue of Ira's much-loved book, *Lyrics on Several Occasions*.

Mark was born in 1956 in San Jose, California, where his interest in musical theater began early on with trips to San Francisco to see road-company productions of Broadway shows. He graduated magna cum laude from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) with a BA in Theater. It was while he was testing the waters of an acting career that he was introduced by Michael Feinstein to Ira and Leonore Gershwin, who asked him to help out at the office they maintained in their home in Beverly Hills. After Ira's death, Mark continued to work with Leonore, preserving and promoting both Ira and George's catalogs. Upon Leonore's death in 1991, Mark became Executive Director of the Trusts.

Beyond the tangible reminders of what Mark accomplished for the Gershwins during his all-too-brief life, he will be remembered for always being open and giving with his extensive knowledge of the wider world of musical theater. He could be counted on to answer questions about even the most obscure show or reference, and to provide the answer with the sound of joy in his voice – the sound of a man who loved what he did.

Mark is survived by his parents, Gene and Mary Goldberg, sisters Keri James and Taryn Stiers, and three nieces and nephews.

MARK TRENT GOLDBERG MEMORIAL

A memorial service for Mark Trent Goldberg was held on July 21, 2005 at the Little Theater in MacGowan Hall on the campus of Mark's alma mater, the University of California, Los Angeles. It was organized by Camille Kuznetz, Marsha Kramer, Gary Carver and Lisa Thomas. Michael Tucci served as the host. Many of Mark's friends and colleagues paid tribute to him in music or words. Among the shared recollections were these:

"Mark made our office an unimpeachable source of information about the Gershwins ... He created, as Lee Gershwin asked him to do, an archive of Gershwin materials that is available to scholars forevermore.

"As we all know, Mark remembered everything ... I used to accuse him of knowing what George Gershwin ate for dinner on a night in 1932.

"Mark was a night owl. He normally arrived at the office mid- to late-morning and, except for rare occasions, was always in the office well after I left for the evening... My most recurring memory is that at the end of each day I would dial [Mark's] extension, 313, and we would exchange wishes for a pleasant evening or make a plan for the next day. So, if there is a heaven, and it has a telephone system, I wish I could dial 313 ... I miss you, Mark. Darn it! You were not supposed to leave work so early! Where's the phone?"
– **Michael Strunsky, Trustee of the Ira and Leonore Gershwin Trusts**

"If life is a journey ... Mark was a cherished friend along the way..." – **Ellen Donaldson, daughter of songwriter Walter Donaldson**

"Sometimes Mark would work late into the

evening. When he thought he was all alone, he would sing, sometimes Gershwin, sometimes not. I would sneak down and sit on the staircase to listen. Those evenings were as good as it gets."
– **Marlene Stepanic, personal assistant and nurse to Leonore Gershwin during her last years**
[Editor's Note: Marlene Stepanic passed away in November 2006 of ALS]

"His knowledge and passion for the musical theater and all things Gershwin was amazing and contagious and occasionally annoying."
– **Actress Marsha Wallace (*The Bob Newhart Show*, *The Simpsons*)**

"Mark was certainly one of the dearest, sweetest, smartest, most thoughtful and certainly the tallest man I've ever known." – **Anne Kaufman Schneider, daughter of playwright George S. Kaufman**

"Who can say if I've been changed for the better,
But, because I knew you,
I have been changed for good."
– **Actor David Garrison, who has portrayed the Wizard of Oz in *Wicked*, quoting lyrics from the show.**

SCHOLARSHIP ESTABLISHED

A lasting tribute to Mark's memory was the establishment of a Mark Trent Goldberg Memorial Scholarship for Musical Theater at UCLA. John Morris, a fourth-year undergraduate, was announced this past June as the first recipient of this award.



Clarke Peters (*Porgy*) and Nicola Hughes (*Bess*).

Photo: Tristram Kenton (courtesy Peter Thompson Associates)

LONDON WELCOMES A NEW *PORGY AND BESS*

Director Trevor Nunn's much anticipated new version of *Porgy and Bess* opened at London's Savoy Theatre on November 9th to a standing ovation, critical acclaim and strong ticket sales. The show has been nominated for 2007 Laurence

Olivier Awards in the Best New Musical, Best Actor and Best Actress in a Musical categories.

Nunn's long association with *Porgy and Bess* dates back to 1986, when he directed the opera for Glyndebourne; this time he was determined that what he calls "the masterpiece of *Porgy and*

Bess" be available to the widest possible audience, larger than could be accommodated by the requirements of opera performance. In an interview published in the Savoy Theatre program, Nunn said, "For several years now, I have been discussing ... the possibility of developing a version of the piece that in vocal range and structure would have the quality of musical theatre rather than of opera." His new version, which Nunn himself adapted, is approximately 40 minutes shorter than the full-length opera. Recitatives have been replaced by dialogue (some of it taken from DuBose Heyward's original novel *Porgy* and from the subsequent stage play written with his wife, Dorothy); key changes have been made since the artists are musical

theater singer-actors, not opera singers; the orchestra has been reduced from an operatic 50 players to 20. There is a lot more dancing than in opera-house presentations of the work.

The cast, who received high praise from the critics, is headed by Clarke Peters (*Porgy*), Nicola Hughes (*Bess*), Cornell S. John (*Crown*), O-T Fagbenle (*Sporting Life*), Dawn Hope (*Serena*), Melanie E. Marshall (*Maria*), Lorraine Velez (*Clara*) and Edward Baruwa (*Jake*). The company began rehearsals in London on September 4th and gave the first preview performance on October 25th.



Trevor Nunn (Rex Features)

The music for the production was adapted and supervised by Gareth Valentine. Don Sebesky provided the orchestral changes and music director David Braun-White conducts the performances. The creative team also includes John Gunter (scenery), Sue Blane (costumes), David Hersey (lighting), Paul Groothuis (sound) and Jason Pennycooke (choreography).

The producers are Richard Frankel, Tom Viertel, Steven Baruch, and Marc Routh; Howard Panter for Ambassador Theatre Group; and Tulchin/Bartner Productions.



The London Press on *Porgy And Bess*

“‘Electrifying’ is an overused word in the critical lexicon, but if ever a show deserved it, it is Trevor Nunn’s magnificent ... *Porgy and Bess*.”

—Paul Taylor, *The Independent*

“Trevor Nunn’s new production has plenty of ev’rything ... [It is] a rich and involving new musical.”

—Mark Shenton, *Sunday Express*

“... there’s so much to admire: music whose originality crosses the decades, lyrics whose articulate simplicity puts our contemporaries to shame, an engrossing tale and an atmosphere to relish and remember.”

—Benedict Nightingale, *The Times*

“It is ... the acting—something so often overlooked in musicals—that will ... establish this production’s claim to be an all-time classic.”

—Tim Walker, *Sunday Telegraph*

“... the ensemble singing is I think the finest I have heard in the West End.”

—Charles Spencer, *The Daily Telegraph*

O-T Fagbenle (Sporting Life). Photo: Tristram Kenton (courtesy Peter Thompson Associates)

A UNIQUE *PORGY AND BESS* RECORDING

Research that began 20 years ago culminated this past fall in the release of the first-ever recording representing George Gershwin’s last revisions on *Porgy and Bess* (Decca, 2 CDs). Featuring conductor John Mauceri, the Nashville Symphony Orchestra and *Porgy and Bess* veterans Alvy Powell and Marquita Lister in the title roles, the recording was made between February 26 and March 1, 2006 in the Andrew Jackson Hall at the Tennessee Performing Arts Center in Nashville, following live concert performances there.

The recording incorporates cuts and changes Gershwin made to tighten the music and running time during the rehearsals and Boston tryout of *Porgy and Bess* prior to its October 10, 1935, New York opening (on its first night in Boston two weeks earlier, it ran 3 1/2 hours). Drawing upon the expert editorial attention of preeminent Gershwin scholars Charles Hamm and Wayne Shirley (who is currently preparing a performing edition of *Porgy and Bess*) and conductor Mauceri, the recording also includes material not heard since the 1930s.

It was Dartmouth professor Hamm who researched and wrote a pivotal article published in the *Journal of the American Musicological Society* in 1987 detailing the revisions Gershwin made (with input from director Rouben Mamoulian) as



Maestro Mauceri became Chancellor of the North Carolina School of the Arts in July 2006 after 16 seasons as director of the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra and six seasons as music director of the Pittsburgh Opera. Photo courtesy of John Mauceri.

he shaped *Porgy and Bess* for performance. Since the piano-vocal score had been published before rehearsals began, it does not reflect the cuts and additions decided on by Gershwin and handwritten into orchestra parts and conductor and stage manager scores as the New York opening approached.

Hamm’s research took him to many archives, including the Theatre Guild Collection at Yale University’s Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript

Library (Theatre Guild was the original producer of *Porgy and Bess*), Harvard’s Loeb Music Library, the New York Public Library and the Music Division of the Library of Congress, longtime repository of the Gershwin manuscripts. His discoveries paved the way for the new recording.

Using Hamm’s article as a starting point, Mauceri and Shirley consulted the marked-up scores and orchestra parts from the original production and restored what they believe were Gershwin’s final intentions regarding *Porgy and Bess*.

THE IRA GERSHWIN ARCHIVES

During his lifetime, Ira Gershwin was an assiduous collector of Gershwiniana. Scrapbooks of newspaper and magazine clippings were started in the early years of the Gershwins' careers. Programs and memorabilia from performances around the world arrived at Ira and Leonore's house in Beverly Hills and were filed along with commercial and private recordings of Gershwin songs and shows. Scripts, photographs, and correspondence to and from both brothers filled boxes and drawers galore.

Lawrence Stewart, a young professor of English literature from Illinois, came to work for Ira in 1953. He helped Ira organize the Gershwin scrapbooks (now at the Library of Congress) and archives. His access to and knowledge of the archives led to the publication of *The Gershwin Years* (co-written by Edward Jablonski) in 1958. The work that Lawrence did until his departure in 1968 formed the basis of the archives as they exist today.

Michael Feinstein joined the Gershwin household in 1976 as Ira's musical assistant; already a talented (though not yet famous) pianist-singer, he entertained Ira in his last years by playing his songs. A born archivist, Michael also catalogued Ira's vast collection of recordings.

Mark Trent Goldberg – originally hired to continue work on the scrapbooks – expanded the archives and computerized both the photo and recording databases, which allowed increased access to information while preserving the original materials from unnecessary handling.

When Ira died in 1983, the archives remained in the “home office” within the Gershwin house at 1021 North Roxbury Drive in Beverly Hills. After Leonore Gershwin's death in 1991, they were moved to an office in Beverly Hills, and in 2000 were relocated to San Francisco, where they now occupy a handsomely restored

1907 building. Today, the archive in San Francisco—under the management of Michael Owen—holds many original items as well as copies of material from other archives, creating a unique view of the work and life of Ira Gershwin. The collection includes nearly 4,000 photographs, from early 20th-century images of Ira and George as children to contemporary production stills; nearly 500 original pieces of sheet music of Gershwin songs; 700 programs—from the first performances of Gershwin music to the most recent; well over 2,000 recordings

in all media, from original studio acetates to compact discs; scripts from all the shows Ira worked on; and more than 5,000 pieces of George and Ira correspondence (including letters to and from such luminaries as Fred Astaire and Florenz Ziegfeld).

During 2006, materials in the archive were studied by, among others, a university professor researching a Gershwin biography, a performer searching for obscure Harold Arlen songs with Ira's lyrics for a cabaret show, and a biographer of Arlen. Archival items such as photographs were used in a variety of publications—from CD booklets to a school

catalog of classes on the history of the American musical.

A vast Gershwin collection is also held at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. In 1939, Ira donated the first item to the library (a musical sketch from *Porgy and Bess*). During their lifetimes, Ira and Leonore continued this gifting of material, gradually including items relating to Ira's career with composers other than George. Ira's accompanying detailed descriptive notes provided valuable additional information. In 1998, the library opened a separate Gershwin Room (temporarily closed) to display material from the collection.



George and Ira, 1930

RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

MY ONE AND ONLY @ REPRISE

The 10th anniversary season of Reprise! began this past September at UCLA's Freud Playhouse with semi-staged performances of the 1983 Gershwin Broadway musical, *My One and Only*. The cast was headed by Rachel York and Michael Gruber as the leads and 87-year-old Betty Garrett as Madam Magix, who "[turned] the title number into an object lesson in stealing a show without trying," according to the Los Angeles Times.

The original production of *My One and Only* starred Tommy Tune and Twiggy and ran for 767 performances at the St. James Theatre in New York, winning Tonys for Best Actor in a Musical (Tune), Best Featured Actor in a Musical (Charles "Honi" Coles) and Best Choreography (Tune and Thommie Walsh).

To launch a new event called "Backstage Pass," Reprise! invited Robert Kimball, the Ira and Leonore Gershwin Trusts' artistic advisor, to speak to the audience prior to the September 16 matinee performance about the background of *My One and Only*. His talk covered the show, its history, and the times in which the Gershwin brothers worked.

Reprise! previously presented two of the Gershwins' political satires, *Of Thee I Sing* in 1998 and *Strike Up the Band* in 2001, as well as *Who Could Ask for Anything More?*, a 2004 celebration of the Gershwin songbook.



PARDON MY ENGLISH @ 42ND STREET MOON

San Francisco's 42nd Street Moon, in its 14th season of finding and performing "lost" musicals, turned its sights in late October and early November to the rarely revived 1933 George and Ira Gershwin screwball musical, *Pardon My English*. Staged concert performances, directed by Bobby Weinapple, were presented at the Eureka Theatre.

The original parts for *Pardon My English* were found in 1982 in the Warner/Chappell warehouse in Secaucus, New Jersey. Reconstructed for a Library of Congress concert in 1987 – and subsequently recorded by the Ira and Leonore Gershwin Trusts in association with the Library of Congress – *Pardon My English* was adapted by David Ives in 2004 for the New York City Center Encores! series.

Pardon My English is the fourth Gershwin musical presented by 42nd Street Moon. Its audiences saw *Lady, Be Good!* in 1996, *Girl Crazy* in 1998, and *Funny Face* in 2000. Since 1993, 42nd Street Moon has staged more than 75 musicals, celebrating the work of many of the 20th century's greatest musical theater composers and lyricists.



TREASURE GIRL @ CARDIFF FESTIVAL

A rare concert performance of George and Ira Gershwin's songs from their 1928 Broadway musical comedy *Treasure Girl* was presented on October 28 at the Sherman Theatre in Cardiff, Wales, as part of the Welsh capital's 2006 International Festival of Musical Theatre, which took place from October 15-November 5. Joanne Benjamin, the festival's chief executive, offered the *Treasure Girl* songs, billed as a European premiere, as the first in a series of "Forgotten Gems." Some of the songs heard at the Cardiff presentation had not been performed in public anywhere since *Treasure Girl* ended its New York run in early 1929.



Rob Fisher (left) was the pianist and musical director. Patricia Hodge (above, right), in the role originally played by the legendary musical comedy star Gertrude Lawrence, headed the London-based cast. The other members of the company were Simon Clarke, Michelle Francis,



Luke Fredericks, Glyn Kerslake and Jessica Sims. Robert Kimball, artistic advisor to the Ira and Leonore Gershwin Trusts, narrated and provided historical background. The concert was performed in memory of the Trusts' longtime executive director Mark Trent Goldberg, who was working on the reconstruction of the *Treasure Girl* score at the time of his death in 2005.

Other highlights of the Cardiff festival included a celebration of the work of Welsh composer David Heneker, a concert version of *Gypsy*, and an all-Gershwin closing night program with soloists and orchestra.

IN THE NEWS

MICHAEL FEINSTEIN ON THE RADIO

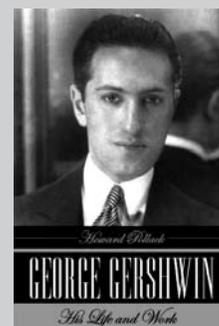
Michael Feinstein recently began recording a new multi-part radio program on the Gershwins for Public Radio International in Chicago. No airing dates for the syndicated broadcast have been announced as yet, but the shows will consist of rare items from Feinstein's vast collection of Gershwin recordings with additional audio material from other archival sources.

ASCAP SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

Hannah Sun, a 17-year-old resident of Flushing, New York, was the 2006 winner of the ASCAP Foundation's Ira Gershwin Scholarship. Hannah is currently a junior at New York City's LaGuardia High School of Music and Art and Performing Arts and a pre-college piano student at the Manhattan School of Music. This scholarship is made possible by a grant to the ASCAP Foundation from the Ira and Leonore Gershwin Philanthropic Fund.

Hannah was born in China and in 1995 moved to Australia, where she was a scholarship student at the Australian National Academy of Music. In 2004 she won first prize in the prestigious New York Piano Competition.

Howard Pollack, John and Rebecca Moores Professor of Music at the University of Houston, recently published a comprehensive 884-page biography of George Gershwin. *George Gershwin: His Life and Work* traces Gershwin's career from Tin Pan Alley to opera houses, with in-depth analyses of his songs and shows and how they have been interpreted. Pollack is the author of well-received biographies of John Alden Carpenter (1995) and Aaron Copland (2001). Publisher: University of California Press, \$39.95.



2007 CALENDAR ITEMS

The seldom-performed 1925 George and Ira Gershwin musical *Tip-Toes* will be produced in 2007 at the 99-seat **Whitefire Theatre** in Sherman Oaks, California. Performances run until February 19. Producer/Musical Director Brian O'Halloran says the show will feature a cast of 12, with piano and drum accompaniment.

Coincidentally, one of O'Halloran's early theatrical teachers was Queenie Smith, star of the original production, who ran the Carousel Training School in Southern California. Additional information can be found at www.whitefiretheatre.com.

The Washington National Opera's 2005 production of *Porgy and Bess*, directed by the much-in-demand Francesca Zambello, travels this spring to the **Los Angeles Opera**, where the performances will be under the baton of the es-

teemed *Porgy and Bess* conductor John DeMain. A lecture on the background of the opera occurs prior to each of the 12 performances (May 4 to May 20) at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion. See www.LAOpera.com for more information.

In honor of the 100th birthday of the *Ziegfeld Follies*, the 2007 season of **New York City Center's Encores!** will salute the Broadway revue. The series concludes on May 10 to 14 with its first specially created production, *Stairway to Paradise*, featuring "50 Years of Revue in Review." The

title song, written by George and Ira (then known as Arthur Francis) Gershwin and Buddy DeSylva, was introduced in *George White's Scandals of 1922*. More information is available at www.nycitycenter.org/encores.

The **Oakland East Bay Symphony** inaugurates a five-year series of "American Masterworks" with a concert presentation of *Porgy and Bess* on May 18, 2007 at the historic Paramount Theatre. This performance will be the culmination of what OEBS Music Director Michael Morgan calls a "Gershwin Year," which includes a cabaret

performance of Gershwin songs, a lecture-demonstration of select songs from the opera, and a forum on the social and cultural context of the piece within the Jewish and African American communities. For more information, visit www.oebs.org.

AN AMERICAN IN PARIS

Houston's Alley Theatre has announced that it will offer the world premiere of *An American in Paris*, a new George and Ira Gershwin musical, during their 2007-2008 season. Ken Ludwig, author of the Tony award-winning Gershwin musical *Crazy for You*, has devised a book for the show that ingeniously links it to the beloved film musical *An American in Paris* and incorporates many of the songs from the movie, but tells a completely new story.

At an afternoon reading held in New York City this past fall, a small invited audience heard the work-in-progress presented

by an outstanding group of Broadway performers, headlined by *Spamalot* costars Harry Groener and Lauren Kennedy, and Bruce Adler, who was Groener's colleague in *Crazy for You*.

An American in Paris is scheduled as part of the Alley's 61st season in Houston, and will be directed by Gregory Boyd, the Alley's artistic director.



Nicola Hughes as Bess in Trevor Nunn's Porgy and Bess.

Photo: Tristram Kenton (courtesy Peter Thompson Associates)

POSTAGE
HERE