

“BYRON STRIPLING & FRIENDS” SHOW NOTES

Cape Symphony presents its first CapePOPS! concert of the 23|24 season, “Byron Stripling & Friends,” on Saturday, October 21 at 7:30 PM and Sunday, October 22, 2023 at 3:00 PM at the Barnstable Performing Arts Center.

Cape Symphony

[Byron Stripling](#), Guest Conductor | Trumpet

[Carmen Bradford](#), Guest Vocalist

[Cape Symphony Musicians](#)

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Pre-concert Presentation

A pre-concert talk by Michael Persico of [Classic Jazz Visions](#) will begin in Knight Auditorium an hour before each performance. Mr. Persico will give a presentation of the photographs of Jack Bradley, longtime friend and personal photographer of the one and only Louis Armstrong. He will share music, rare photographs and treasured stories of Mr. Armstrong and other jazz luminaries of the time.

Program

ALEXANDER’S RAGTIME BAND

Irving Berlin/arr. Jeff Tyzik

ST. JAMES INFIRMARY

Joe Primrose (arr. Mackrel/Orch, Tyzik)

A TISKET, A TASKET

Fitzgerald/Feldman/arr. Cook

MR. PAGANINI

Sam Coslow

I GOT RHYTHM

George Gershwin (arr. Riddle)

I CAN'T GIVE YOU ANYTHING BUT LOVE

Jimmy McHugh

BUT NOT FOR ME

George Gershwin (arr. Riddle)

THEY CAN'T TAKE THAT AWAY FROM ME

George Gershwin

SWEET GEORGIA BROWN

Bernie/Pinkard (arr. Mackrel)

Intermission

ST. LOUIS BLUES

W.C. Handy (arr. Tyzik)

BIRTH OF THE BLUES

Ray Henderson (arr. Rhodes)

I WON'T DANCE

Jerome Kern (Arr. Riddle)

SOMEONE TO WATCH OVER ME

George Gershwin (Arr. Riddle)

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George Gershwin (Arr. Riddle)

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About Today's Program

ALEXANDER'S RAGTIME BAND (1911)

Irving Berlin/arr. Jeff Tyzik

This Tin Pan Alley song was originally performed as an instrumental piece that didn't particularly wow audiences. It wasn't a hit until Irving Berlin added lyrics and performed it on Broadway. There, *Variety* deemed "Alexander's Ragtime Band" "the musical sensation of the decade." George Gershwin reportedly called it "the first real American musical work... Berlin had shown us the way; it was now easier to attain our ideal." "Flabbergasted" by the song's sudden international popularity, Berlin figured it was the lyrics that "started the heels and shoulders of all America and a good section of Europe to rocking."

“Alexander’s Ragtime Band” sparked an international dance craze and gave ragtime a new life. “Paris dances to it; Vienna has forsaken the waltz; Madrid has flung away her castanets, and Venice has forgotten her barcarolles. Ragtime has swept like a whirlwind over the earth,” swooned *The Daily Express* in 1913.

Sent to the top of the charts time and again over the years, “Alexander’s Ragtime Band” was recorded by Benny Goodman, Louis Armstrong, Bing Crosby, Ella Fitzgerald, Ray Charles, and many others.

ST. JAMES INFIRMARY (1928)

Joe Primrose (arr. Mackrel/Orch, Tyzik)

Louis Armstrong brought this blues and jazz standard from folk tradition to lasting fame with his 1928 recording. Formerly known as “Gambler’s Blues,” it’s a terribly sad song, as the narrator mourns his deceased beloved and gives instructions for his own funeral when the time comes. In some versions, the narrator relays this as a story told to him by a fellow barroom patron.

Like many traditional songs, “St. James Infirmary” represents a confluence of multiple sources, versions, additions and confections with other songs, with competing copyrights and claims asserted over the decades. Composition credit eventually settled on “Joe Primrose,” a pseudonym of music publisher Irving Mills.

The very definition of mournful, “St. James Infirmary” has been recorded by hundreds of artists, including in more recent years, Lou Rawls (1963), Joe Cocker (1972), Arlo Guthrie (2007), and Hugh Laurie (2007). Any way it comes out, it’s pure blues.

A TISKET, A TASKET (1938)

Fitzgerald/Feldman/arr. Cook

This nursery rhyme was first recorded in America in the late 19th century. It formed the basis for a very successful and highly regarded recording by the incomparable Ella Fitzgerald, who became known as “the First Lady of Song,” “Queen of Jazz,” and “Lady Ella.” She extended and embellished the rhyme, and her resulting composition was her breakthrough hit with the Chick Webb Orchestra in 1938. It boosted her and Webb to national fame.

The song became an instantly recognizable, beloved jazz standard.

Ms. Fitzgerald performed the song in the 1942 Abbot and Costello film *Ride ‘em Cowboy*, and it was included by Bing Crosby in a melody on his 1962 album *On the Happy Side*. Nabisco capitalized on its fame and popularity with a riff for the 1970s ad campaign “A Triscuit, A Triscuit, Baked only by Nabisco.”

MR. PAGANINI (1936)

Sam Coslow

“(If You Can’t Sing It) You’ll Have to Swing It (Mr. Paganini)” was first recorded by Ella Fitzgerald in 1936. It became one of her signature songs, a fixture of her live performances, and a famous springboard for her incredible scat singing: “and if you can’t sing it, you’ll simply have to...”

Ella Fitzgerald is considered one of the greatest scat singers in all of jazz history, and “Mr. Paganini” has a great deal to do with it.

The song was performed by Chaka Khan and Natalie Cole on the 2007 tribute album *We All Love Ella: Celebrating the First Lady of Song*, recorded to mark her 90th birthday. Celine Dion has performed it as part of her Las Vegas residency.

I GOT RHYTHM (1930)

George Gershwin (arr. Riddle)

This beloved, feel-good song came from the musical *Girl Crazy*, and has been performed by countless jazz singers since. It became a standard almost immediately on publication, with an ascending and descending four-note opening that is instantly recognizable to this day.

Ethel Merman sang “I Got Rhythm” in the original Broadway production of *Girl Crazy*. The story has it that George Gershwin, on seeing reviews of her opening performance, warned her never to take a singing lesson!

“I Got Rhythm” has been recorded by Louis Armstrong, Jimmy Dorsey, Benny Goodman, Bing Crosby, Thelonious Monk, and Tony Bennett and Diana Krall. The song was featured in the 1951 musical film *An American in Paris*, in which Gene Kelly sang and tap-danced into countless hearts. Less famously, it was part of a *Muppet Show* episode in which Rowlf the Dog tries and fails to impart rhythm to Fozzie Bear, but ends up changing the lyrics to “I Don’t Got Rhythm” instead. Who could ask for anything more? “We could! Earplugs!” shout cranky hecklers Statler and Waldorf.

I CAN’T GIVE YOU ANYTHING BUT LOVE (1928)

Jimmy McHugh

This popular standard by Jimmy McHugh (music) and Dorothy Fields (lyrics) was introduced in New York City in 1928. It is said to have been inspired as they were strolling down Fifth Avenue and observed a young couple window shopping at Tiffany’s. “I’d like to get you a sparkler like that,” the man said to his sweetheart, “but right now I can’t give you nothin’ but love.”

McHugh and Fields dashed off and came up with “I Can’t Give You Anything But Love, Baby” inside an hour.

Among the luminaries who’ve recorded the tune are Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Mickey and Minnie Mouse, Billie Holiday, Bennie Goodman, Glenn Miller, Ella Fitzgerald, Dean Martin, Judy Garland, and Tony Bennet and Lady Gaga, to rave reviews.

BUT NOT FOR ME (1930)

George Gershwin (arr. Riddle)

Like “I Got Rhythm,” “But Not For Me” was also composed for the musical comedy *Girl Crazy*. It was introduced in the original production by Ginger Rogers.

Ella Fitzgerald’s 1959 recording appeared on *Ella Fitzgerald Sings the George and Ira Gershwin Songbook*, and won the Grammy Award for Best Female Vocal Performance.

Other notable recordings include those by Bing Crosby, Judy Garland, Miles Davis, Sarah Vaughan, John Coltrane, Sam Cooke, and Linda Ronstadt. Harry Connick Jr. recorded it for the film *When Harry Met Sally* in 1989. In more recent years Diana Krall, Rod Stewart and Elton John have all recorded "But Not For Me." Audiences are still enchanted.

THEY CAN'T TAKE THAT AWAY FROM ME (1937)

George Gershwin

In this charming, bittersweet song, one lover shares things they will always remember about the other, even as they both recognize their romance is ending. It was introduced by Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers in the classic 1937 film *Shall We Dance*. Astaire sings on the foggy deck of a Manhattan-bound ferry, as a tear rolls down Ginger's cheek. "The way you wear your hat, the way you sip your tea; the memory of all that... no, they can't take that away from me."

George Gershwin died not long after the film was released. He was posthumously nominated for Best Original Song at the 1937 Oscars.

Sarah Vaughan, Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong, Mel Tormé and many others have tapped into the emotion of this beautiful song over the years. Rod Stewart and Van Morrison are among those who've recorded it more recently.

SWEET GEORGIA BROWN (1925)

Bernie/Pinkard (arr. Mackrel)

This song spent five weeks at the top of the charts for Ben Bernie & His Hotel Roosevelt Orchestra in 1925, and remains a top jazz standard to this day. Bernie, the story goes, came up with the concept for "Sweet Georgia Brown" after meeting Dr. George Thaddeus Brown, a longtime member of the Georgia House of Representatives whose daughter was named Georgia after the state by official declaration of the Georgia General Assembly. Hence, "Georgia claimed her, Georgia named her, Sweet Georgia Brown."

The song has been a popular improvisational vehicle, surviving the transition from the Dixieland style of the "roaring 20s" to the smooth swing sound of the 1930s.

Count Basie, Ella Fitzgerald, Django Reinhardt, Mel Tormé and others have performed and recorded "Sweet Georgia Brown" to high acclaim. Bing Crosby's 1952 recording went to #2 in the charts. In 1994, Roberta Flack recorded the tune with added lyrics to update Sweet Georgia Brown's image as "gorgeous, sexy, strong and intelligent."

Intermission

ST. LOUIS BLUES (1913)

W.C. Handy (arr. Tyzik)

W.C. Handy, "Father of the Blues," took up the trumpet over the objections of his father, a preacher who believed anything not a hymn was "the devil's music." Handy toured the American South in the late 19th and early 20th century, collecting and transcribing melodies and patterns of African-American songs and spirituals. He became known as "the jazzman's Hamlet."

This song was reportedly inspired by a chance meeting of Handy's with a woman on the streets of St. Louis, distraught over her husband's absence and lamenting "ma man's got a heart like a rock cast in de sea."

"St. Louis Blues" is distinguished from traditional blues form, sharing characteristics with classic ragtime compositions. Handy said his goal was to "combine ragtime syncopation with a real melody in the spiritual tradition."

A 1998 recording by Herbie Hancock with Stevie Wonder on vocals won two Grammy awards; Wonder's for Best Male R&B Vocal Performance, and Hancock's for Best Instrumental Arrangement Accompanying Vocals.

The 1925 recording of this song by Bessie Smith with Louis Armstrong on cornet was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 1993; the 1929 version by Louis Armstrong & His Orchestra (with Red Allen) was inducted in 2008.

BIRTH OF THE BLUES (1926)

Ray Henderson (arr. Rhodes)

Ray Henderson came from a musical and theatrical family, and worked in music publishing and in vaudeville as a pianist. Lyrics for "Birth of the Blues" were written by Buddy DeSylva, cofounder of Capitol Records, and Tin Pan Alley lyricist Lew Brown. The three men became one of the hottest songwriting teams in the business.

"Birth of the Blues" was used in a long-running string of Broadway revues called *George White's Scandals*. Famous recordings include those by Sammy Davis Jr., Bing Crosby, and Frank Sinatra. Fans of the Netflix political thriller series *House of Cards* may remember Kevin Spacey performing the song as President Frank Underwood.

I WON'T DANCE (1935)

Jerome Kern (Arr. Riddle)

This jazz standard has two sets of lyrics. The first, written by Oscar Hammerstein II and Otto Harback in 1934, were for the London musical *Three Sisters*, which flopped. Dorothy Fields rewrote most of the lyrics to create the playful song we all know and love today. Performed by Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers in the 1935 film *Roberta*, the song became a huge hit.

The long list of notable recordings of "I Won't Dance" includes performances by Frank Sinatra, Johnny Mathis, Ella Fitzgerald, Peggy Lee, Lady Gaga and Tony Bennett, and Diana Krall. Kermit the Frog and Miss Piggy performed the song to hilarious effect in a *Muppet Show* ballroom sketch in 1973.

SOMEONE TO WATCH OVER ME (1926)

George Gershwin (Arr. Riddle)

George and Ira Gershwin wrote this song for the musical "Oh, Kay!" which ran for more than 200 Broadway performances with the song as its centerpiece. Marked "scherzando" (playful) in the sheet music, it was meant to be a "fast and jazzy" tune, but in later years was more commonly recorded in the slower ballad form that became the standard.

Popular recordings by Frank Sinatra for his first album in 1946, and again in 1954 for the film *Young at Heart*, helped solidify the slow style. More than 1800 recordings, almost all as ballads, have been released.

“Someone to Watch Over Me” was covered by Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan, Barbra Streisand, Ray Charles, Willie Nelson, Sinéad O’Connor, Elton John and Amy Winehouse, among others. Linda Ronstadt included it on her 1983 album *What’s New*, which won a Grammy.

A FOGGY DAY (1937)

George Gershwin

“A Foggy Day” was introduced by Fred Astaire in the film *A Damsel in Distress*. It was originally titled “A Foggy Day (In London Town),” in reference to the thick, sooty, pea soup fog that was terribly common in London at that time.

Louis Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday, Frank Sinatra, Judy Garland, Sarah Vaughan, Tony Bennett, David Bowie, Michael Bublé and Willie Nelson (on his Grammy-winning Frank Sinatra tribute album) have all recorded “A Foggy Day.” The recordings are as different as the artists, as each puts their own special touch on this timeless favorite.

LOVE IS HERE TO STAY (1938)

George Gershwin (Arr. Riddle)

“Love is Here to Stay” was the last musical composition Gershwin completed before his death in 1937. Ira wrote the lyrics afterwards, as a tribute to his brother.

First performed by Kenny Baker in the movie *The Goldwyn Follies*, “Love is Here to Stay” was popularized by Gene Kelly in *An American in Paris* in 1951. Harry Connick Jr. made it part of the soundtrack for 1989’s *When Harry Met Sally*.

Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong recorded the song in 1957 on their studio album *Ella and Louis Again*.

BILL BAILEY (1902)

Hughie Cannon (Arr. Mackrel)

A Dixieland, ragtime and jazz standard, “(Won’t You Come Home) Bill Bailey” was written by pianist Hughie Cannon while he was working at a Michigan saloon. Willard “Bill” Bailey, a friend and fellow jazz musician, was a regular customer. Chatting about the state of Bailey’s marriage, Cannon dashed off a ditty about Bailey’s irregular hours. Bailey, reportedly, found this more amusing than did his wife. Cannon sold the rights to the song to a New York publisher. It quickly became a popular hit, and then a standard, and has been covered many times since. Louis Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald, Pearl Bailey, Aretha Franklin, and Bobby Darin have all recorded the song.

Cannon’s music is thought to represent the growth of commercial blues in American culture. Over the years, “Bill Bailey” has often been parodied, notably by Sandler & Young in a 20-minute medley adapting the song to various styles, including Italian opera; and *The Jetsons*, in a 1963 episode in which Jane belts out “Won’t You Fly Home, Bill Spacely.”

Please note the program is subject to change.

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For more information and to purchase tickets for Byron Stripling & Friends, visit capesymphony.org, call the Box Office at 508-362-1111, email tickets@capesymphony.org, or visit 2235 Iyannough Road in West Barnstable, MA. The Box Office is open Monday – Friday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

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