

March 20, 21: Comedy Company presents:

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8 PM in the Michigan Union U-Club, Tickets \$3 and \$5 at MUTO.

March 21: Amazin' Blue presents their

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8 PM in Rackham Auditorium, Tickets \$6 at MUTO.

March 21-22: Michigan Academic Competition hosts:

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All day in Angell Hall, Free Admission for spectators.

March 27: M-Flicks presents:

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March 27 - 29: MUSKET presents:

"PIPPIN"

Shows March 27 & 28 at 8 PM, March 29 at 2 PM. Power Center, Tickets \$7 and \$12 at Michigan League Ticket Office.

April 3-5: The Rude Mechanicals present:

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April 3: M-Flicks presents:

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April 16: The State Street Poetry Project

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A Welcome from Our Directors

Thank you for joining us this evening in a celebration of George Gershwin! We are so excited to be able to pay tribute to one of America's greatest composers.

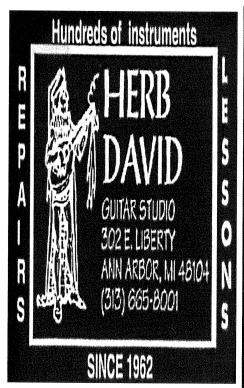
The Michigan Pops Orchestra is Ann Arbor's only student-run and student-directed orchestra. The group is comprised of approximately seventy-five musicians, freshmen through graduate students. Members come from the colleges of Literature, Science and Arts, Engineering, Music, Nursing, and Business. Our ensemble was founded in 1995 ago to serve as a showcase for popular orchestral music. It is our hope that through our performances, we will not only add to the diversity within our musical community, but also create an environment that will attract a wider audience to the concert hall.

We are thankful this year to have joined a parent organization, University Activities Center (UAC), which is comprised of many committees who provide concerts, lectures, publications and other services to the University community. UAC supports the Michigan Pops Orchestra, both financially and structurally, as well as providing much needed office space and a wonderful secretary, Mary.

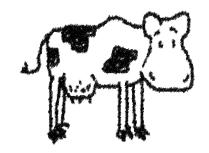
The both of us are so proud to have been part of such a wonderful organization. Many thanks to everyone! We hope the efforts of all involved will help the orchestra to continue to shine in the future.

Emily Harkins
Executive Director

Steven Bizub Music Director







Friday, April 3rd at the Nat Sci Auditorium

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MICHIGAN POPS ORCHESTRA

Steven Bizub, Conductor

A GERSHWIN CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION
March 15, 1998
Power Center for the Performing Arts

George and Ira on Broadway:

Lara Serebrier, Soprano Barrett Foa, Tenor

Girl Crazy Overture

"Love is Here to Stay"

"By Strauss"

"Embraceable You"

"Nice Work if You Can Get It"

Rhapsody in Blue

Sam Davis, Piano

INTERMISSION

Excerpts from Porgy and Bess:

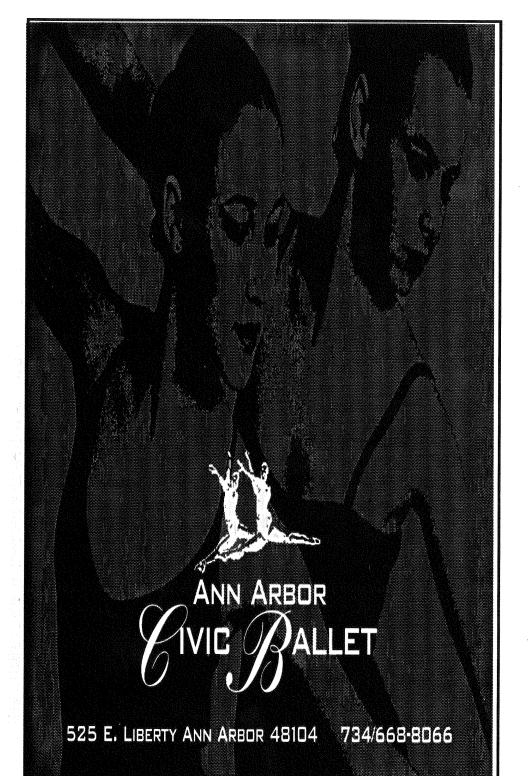
Karen Johnson, Soprano Kerstan Reese, Bass "Summertime"

"My Man's Gone Now"

"I Got Plenty O' Nuttin"

"Bess, You is My Woman Now"

An American in Paris



MICHIGAN' **ORCHESTRA**

Steven Bizub, Music Director

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Viola

Laura Dow James Gross* Benita Kuo Noelle Mckenzie **Eunice Rhiew** Mark Zakaria

** Concertmaster * Principal

Cello

John Dunn Katri Ervamaa* Stacey Hall Joel Hoffman Harland Holman Calvin Hwang Kimberly Riggle

Contrabass

Aaron Borgman Kira Sieplinga*

Flute

Phoebe Frenette Tara Oxley Jessica Raposo*

Ohoe

Carrie Best Maureen Johnson*

Clarinet

Ho-Yan Cheung Kristen Grattan* Katherine Severs

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Paul Bhasin* Robert P. Cohen Dave Ostreicher

Trombone

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Percussion

Timothy Brown* Grace Chan Tom Kim Brian Magnuson Dan Piccolo

Piano/Celeste

Stephanie Love

Stage Manager Benjamin Hess

Graphic Design

Laura Hogan

Our Music Director



Steven Bizub is currently a Senior completing a Bachelor's in Performance degree in the Artist & Scholar Honors Program at the University of Michigan School of Music. He has studied saxophone with Donald Sinta and currently studies operatic conducting with Martin Katz. Other past and present teachers include Kenneth Kiesler, Marianne Ploger, Lynne Bartholomew, Larry Rachleff, and Gustav Meier.

Throughout his four years at U of M, Steven has been fortunate to enjoy many conducting opportunities. Steven served as Music Director and Conductor of the U of M Gilbert and

Sullivan Society's production of *The Yeomen of the Guard*. Steven is continuing his work in the theatre as Music Director of *Mina and Colossus*, a new musical by Sam Davis and Ron Nyren which debuts this April. Since his sophomore year, Steven has been the founding Music Director and Conductor of the Michigan Pops Orchestra. Steven's continued leadership in the ensemble, now in its third year, represents his most important work at U of M. This past summer, with aid from a Power Grant from the School of Music, Steven traveled to Czech Republic to study orchestral conducting. Steven is also involved with the UMS Choral Union as an Assistant Conductor under Thomas Sheets.

This concert marks Steven's last performance as Music Director of the Michigan Pops Orchestra. He would like to thank all of the wonderful friends he has made who have helped make this experience such a wonderful one. Steven would also like to extend warmest appreciation to his parents, Cy and Penny. This performance is dedicated to them for their unwavering love, support, and guidance.

Our Soloists

Sam Davis is delighted to be appearing with the Michigan Pops Orchestra, making this his first appearance as piano soloist at the University of Michigan. Sam, whose main interest is American musical theater, will be returning to the Power Center later this month to conduct MUSKET's production of Pippin (another UAC project), and has also been involved with such past U of M shows as Cabaret, Falsetoland, and The Music Man. Also a composer, in April he will witness the world premiere of his original musical, Mina and Colossus (also conducted by Steven Bizub), and last August was honored to hear his song "Victor" performed by William Bolcom and Joan Morris in Charlemont, MA. Sam, who is from New York City, will receive a BMA in Composition this spring.



Lara Serebrier has most recently been seen in the revival of Gershwin's Oh! Kay!, as part of the prestigious lost musical series at the Barbican Theatre in London. She has also appeared as a featured soloist at the Golden Gala Benefit Concert, in Washington D.C., with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra alongside Aretha Franklin. Her previous professional experience includes creating the lead role of Beatrice in the world-premiere opera Marie De Montpellier in France, as well as creating the role of Petite Minguet in La Passion De Gilles. Both were televised through out Europe. On television, Lara has made appearances on The Krypton Factor (Thames TV) and Blue Peter (BBC TV) in

the U.K. and on *A Chorus Line* for CBC TV, Canada. Lara has also played the title role in *Annie* at the Wimbledon Theatre in London. Lara would like to thank her friends and family for the continual love and support.



Barrett Foa just returned from a semester abroad in London, and is currently a junior in the Musical Theatre Department here at The University of Michigan. Past university productions include Grand Hotel, Born Guilty, and The Music Man. He was recently cast in the role of Diesel, who sings "Cool" in the upcoming production of West Side Story. Favorite roles include Matt in The Fantasticks and Mordred in Camelot. Barrett hails from New York City.



Karen Johnson, Soprano, is originally from Goldsboro, NC and holds her Bachelor of Science degree in Information Systems and Operations Management from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. In 1991, Karen was accepted to U of M whre she received her Bachelor and Master of Music degrees. She is currently pursuing a Doctorate Degree at U of M under the tutelege of Dr. Willis Patterson, Associate Dean of the School of Music. Karen has appeared in several operatic productions including Amahl and the Night Visitors, Dialogues des Carmelites and Hansel and Gretel. In addition, she is a

frequently requested recitalist in various cities across the United States. Recently, Karen was a finalist in the School of Music Performance Competition. In 1997 she won First Place in the Detroit Regional Leontyne Price Vocal Competition, and went on to win Third Place in the District Finals. Also, Karen was chosen from more than 400 singers as a Quarterfinalist in the National American Traditions Competition held in Savannah, Georgia. Karen has received numerous scholarship awards, including the U of M Merit-Based Scholarship, and U of M Fellowships for Graduate Study. She has been named to the National Dean's List, was named a University Scholar and is a member of the Golden Key National Honor Society and the Pi Kappa Lambda Honor Society.



A native of the greater Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti Area, *Kerstan Reese's* musical career started at a very early age singing in the church choir. Kerstan studied voice under Willis Patterson, founder of the highly recognized *Our Own Thing* program, and received invitations to Interlochen as a result. In high school, Kerstan took his "Bass" voice and his appreciation for music to the next level by becoming a member of the "*Traveling Choir*." Upon entering college, he continued to display his musical ability by joining the University Singers who performed all over the U.S., Canada, and Caribbean. Recently, Kerstan

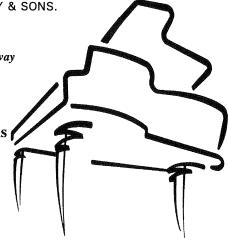
performed roles in the T.J. Hemphill musical play, *Perilous Times*, and the lead roles in Iris Allen's musical plays, *Spiritual Rots*, and *The Serpent Comes to Church*. Kerstan is a member of the UMS Choral Union and is the Assistant Director for the choral group, Variations. Variations will be touring London, England in July 1998 and South Africa in 1999.

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Happy Birthday George!!

In the one hundred years since the birth of George Gershwin, much has changed in American music. When he was becoming established in 1920, musical categories were clearly demarcated. Most who knew concert music did not attend Broadway shows. Musical theater was meant to appeal to a large segment of the population, but African-American theater, of which there was a rich tradition, had barely entered the language of the mainstream audience. In addition, the sophisticated and energetic language of jazz, though gaining an erudite following during Gershwin's life, remained far from the musical academy. Today these boundaries are much less noticeable, and one of the composers who did much to break down these barriers was George Gershwin.

Beginning with a small job as a song plugger in New York's Tin Pan Alley, he soon worked his way to song writing and composing Broadway musicals. It is typical of Gershwin's indefatigable personality that he always sought new paths and greater challenges. By the time he was thirty, he was not only an established composer on Broadway, he was the most famous and widely accepted composer of concert music. This evening's performance illustrates the breadth of Gershwin's music, capturing the humor, the sensitivity, the sophistication, and the exuberance of one of America's greatest composers.

George and Ira on Broadway

To many, Gershwin is first and foremost a great composer of Broadway tunes. He worked with many lyricists, but his most frequent partner was his brother, Ira Gershwin. All of tonight's songs were written by the Ira and George team. When composing, George wrote the tune first, then Ira wrote the lyrics, after which both collaborated on finishing touches. Songs came to fruition in several ways. Some were interpolated into revues featuring a mixture of songwriters, others functioned as part of a complete musical show by Gershwin alone.

One such musical is *Girl Crazy* from 1930. The original cast featured the emerging stars Ethel Merman and Ginger Rogers. A rollicking farce on the old west adapted to include an urban "girl crazy" bachelor, the Gershwin team here created one of their best scores, including Merman's show-stopping rendition of "I Got Rhythm". Also included in the show was "Embraceable You", another one of Gershwin's most beloved tunes. The repetition within each phrase leaves the audience whistling as they travel home, making the tunes easy to recognize and remember.

The last song Gershwin wrote was "Love is Here to Stay". The tune first appeared in the movie *The Goldwyn Follies*, which was released seven months after Gershwin's death. Ira's lyrics are quite clever; certain turns of phrase ("our love is here to stay; not for a year, but ever and a day") transcend everyday speech, while hyperbole ("the Rockies may crumble, Gibraltar may tumble") keeps a light-hearted tone throughout. Gershwin keeps the music classically simple, with basic harmonies given distinctively sophisticated Gershwin treatment of added sevenths and ninths.

The song "By Strauss" shows the witty side of the team in a rare moment of self-deprecation, ironically preferring 19th-century waltzes by Johann Strauss, Jr. to the Gershwin style. Those in the audience of *The Show is On*, in which "By Strauss" first appeared in 1936, would immediately have recognized how unusual a triple-meter waltz was in the song repertoire of Gershwin and his colleagues. The lyrics show Ira's potential for witty rhyme ("for night-clubbing souses . . . the waltz must be Strauss's"), but it is Gershwin who captures the prize for wit, matching the text with amusing musical references. He plays on the prolonged upbeat that begins a waltz (along with a little ornamentation on the downbeat), and he pairs Ira's lyrics about waltz meter ("swinging to three quarter time") with a brief segment in duple time. Though the verse's lyrics take light-handing pot shots at major Broadway composers Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern, Cole Porter, and even Gershwin himself. It is the composer Gershwin who makes the nastiest statement of the song-writing team, quoting a phrase from Porter's "I've Got You Under My Skin" to Ira's lyrics "How can I be civil when hearing this drivel?"

"Nice Work if You Can Get It" was one of the tunes from RKO's movie A Damsel in Distress, with Fred Astaire, Joan Fontaine, George Burns, and Gracie Allen. The tune shows the Gershwin team at their most optimistic, assuaging Depression-era anxieties, as so many Hollywood musicals did in the 30s. They remind us that the best work, "if you can get it", is spent on romance. Ira's lyrics also borrows the line "who could ask for anything more?" from "I Got Rhythm." The main tune in "Nice Work" opens simply, allowing for Gershwin's distinctive thumbprint of enriched chords. As we come to the title phrase, the melody becomes catchier, and Gershwin supplies natural rhythms analogous to a speaking voice without letting the melody lose its inherent tunefulness.

Rhapsody in Blue

By Gershwin's twenty-fifth birthday, he had composed dozens of popular songs and a half-dozen full-length Broadway scores; he also enjoyed a reputation as an unusually talented pianist. He decided to return to classical music, an interest he had as a child, and began composing a rhapsody for piano and orchestra that fused his appreciation of jazz and good tunes with a virtuoso orchestra.

The decision to compose Rhapsody in Blue came about via Paul Whiteman, the leader of a popular orchestra, who wanted to include Gershwin in a concert he dreamed up, called "An Experiment in Modern Music" in which Whiteman's orchestra would perform new music by popular composers in a prestigious concert hall. Though Whiteman had mentioned his interest to Gershwin, no agreement was even close to being made when Whiteman announced to the press, only five weeks before the proposed concert, that Gershwin was supplying a piano concerto.

Not one to be daunted by such Herculean efforts, Gershwin got to work as soon as possible. Ultimately he created one of the most important works of its time. From the famous sultry clarinet glissando that opens the work and passages with bluesy tonalities or jazz syncopations to the exchange of memorable themes and extended piano cadenzas, Gershwin fused an American language with a symphonic masterpiece. As was customary with theater works, an arranger (Ferde Grofé in this case) orchestrated Gershwin's two-piano original. Grofé's first version was for a small jazz band, but in subsequent years, he wrote several other versions, including the one for orchestra on today's program.

With Whiteman conducting, Gershwin at the keyboard, and a glittering audience of New York's social elite, the concert was nothing short of an absolute triumph. As a result, George Gershwin was catapulted, overnight, into the role as America's most famous composer. At a time when most concert halls hosted mostly European works and resisted popular repertoire, Gershwin and Whiteman started something that would forever change the face of American orchestras: a repertoire that borrowed rhythms and enriched harmonies from African-American jazz and merged them with extended pieces written for a full-size orchestra. The *Rhapsody in Blue* was Gershwin's first, bold step in a new kind of music. From that point forward, he would juggle his success as a Broadway composer with extended works intended for the concert hall.

Porgy and Bess

Without a doubt, Gershwin's opera *Porgy and Bess* was the most ambitious project he attempted. Opera is a very different craft from the musicals he so excelled in writing, and Gershwin had to blend his penchant for writing great tunes with a full-scale dramatic work on a disturbing subject matter. Gershwin, who had consistently incorporated musical idioms from African-American culture into his language, sought to create in his words a "folk opera" that presented the rich cultural life of southern blacks.

He first conceived of writing the opera after he read DuBose Heyward's novel *Porgy*. Seven years later, Gershwin secured Heyward's assistance in the libretto; Ira Gershwin collaboratedwith Heyward on some of the lyrics, including "I Got Plenty o' Nuttin'" and "Bess You is My Woman Now." The plot revolves around the love of Porgy, a handicapped beggar from "Catfish Row" in Charleston, South Carolina, and Bess, a woman whom her community scorns for her past. Porgy is a clean, religious man whose unconditional love for Bess knows no bounds; Bess has the best of intentions with Porgy but neither the will nor the patience to resist the temptations she faces. Their love is doomed. Many other characters complete the community, though few are developed substantially. These include Crown, Bess's man when the opera starts; Clara and Jake, parents of a tiny baby who represents hope within the community; Serena and Robbins; and the wily drug peddler Sporting Life.

The opera begins, after a brief introduction, with the well-known lullaby "Summertime," sung by Clara. Gershwin provides a softly rolling accompaniment that not only puts the baby to sleep, it also provides the musical suggestion of the oppressive heat of a southern summer. Clara's optimism notwithstanding, she and the baby's father will die in a storm before the opera is over.

In the streets of Catfish Row, a fight erupts over gambling. Crown murders Robbins in the dispute, then disappears. Serena's impassioned lament for her husband, "My Man's Gone Now", shows how Gershwin adapted his background as a songwriter to depict the overwhelming pain of human grief. Retaining from popular song the principle of clearly demarcated parallel phrases with motivic repetition, Gershwin extends the typical eight-bar phrases into thirteen, fifteen, or seventeen bars, filling the additional bars with musical accompaniment that amplifies the mood.

The main character, Porgy, has his first extended musical expression only in the second act with the catchy song "I Got Plenty O' Nuttin'." His infectious happiness is largely due to his newfound love for Bess. Along with "Summertime," this tune has remained one of the great favorites from the whole opera. The new couple reiterate their love in the duet "Bess, You is My Woman Now."

David Brownell

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The many critics of *Porgy and Bess* objected to the string of hit tunes; black critics found the music a misrepresentation of their music. All failed to take into account the originality of Gershwin's statement, the subtlety of musical expression, and the drama of the whole work. Though the opera initially did not succeed as much as Gershwin might have liked, he recognized that he had created a work of lasting value. Gershwin confided to the conductor, "I think the music is so marvelous--I don't believe I wrote it!"

An American in Paris

It was during an extended visit to Paris in 1928 that Gershwin conceived of his tone poem *An American in Paris*. Meant to recall the hustle and bustle of this great European city, Gershwin was especially inspired by the taxi horns that made the sonorities of Paris so distinctive. After spending an afternoon shopping in auto parts stores, Gershwin carefully selected a smattering of horns with just the right honks, squeaks, and squawks for the effects he sought in the outer sections. The piece is a medley of tunes that are varied and extended. The complex rhythms proved difficult for many an orchestra of his time. The slow section, called "homesickness blues", is one of the most original and nostalgic segments he wrote. Gershwin saw that An *American in Paris* marked another stage directing him to symphonic music, which would ultimately help him realize, with *Porgy and Bess*, his dream of composing an opera.

George Gershwin died unexpectedly of a brain tumor in Beverly Hills, California. He was 38. Perhaps one of the most eloquent tributes to Gershwin came from Todd Duncan, who created the original role of Porgy. "A performance with George Gershwin," he explained, "was like a trancendent experience. It commanded the attention of all alike; the intelligensia, the so-called low brow; the rich and poor; the thousands or the one. He was always sincere, moving, and vibrant." Upon hearing of Gershwin's death, friend John O'Hara remarked, "George Gershwin died on July 11, but I don't have to believe it if I don't want to."

Notes by Denise Pilmer Taylor



Our Executive Director



Emily Harkins is a senior pursuing a Bachlor of S cience degree in the Residential College at the University of Michigan. Majoring in The Science and Ethics of Genetics, Emily also has a deep love of music, performing her violin solo and in various University ensembles. Emily has been a member and leader of the Michigan Pops Orchestra since its foundation in 1995. Starting as the Orchestra's secretary, Emily has now held the position of Executive Director for two years. Emily would like to thank the Board of Directors and the Orchestra for three wonderful years. She looks forward to returning to Ann Arbor and hearing the Michigan Pops Orchestra in the many seasons to come and wishes to thank her parents for their continued support.

Our Treasurer

Tamy Lupnitz is a junior at the University of Michigan School of Business Administration, majoring in Accounting and Finance. She spent her first year with the orchestra as a flautist, and has proceeded to be the Treasurer for the past two years. Tamy is also one of the representatives for the Michigan Pops Orchestra on the University Activities Council Board.

Our Secretary

This is *Jessica Raposo*'s third concert with the Pops and the end of her first year on the board. She is a sophomore performance and music education major at the School of Music. All the best to Steve and Emily for the future. Thanks, guys!

Our Librarian

This is *Elisa Moore*'s first year on the board of the Michigan Pops Orchestra but she's a veteran when it comes to playing with the group. From copying to sorting to stapling, Elisa's got it all down. After her time here she hopes to work in the field of Industrial and Operations Engineering.

Our Advertising Director

Grace Chan is a freshman in the College of Literature, Science and Arts, from Hong Kong. This is her first year on the board of the Michgan Pop Orchestra.

This evening you can find Grace performing in the Percussion Section of the Pops. Thanks for coming!!!

Our Executive Assistant

This is *Ari Lamstein*'s first term with the MPO. He became interested in orchestra administration after he got tendinitis and could no longer play classical guitar. He's a math major and founder of the University Chess Club.

Our Program Director

Once again, *Dave Ostreicher* returns to the Pops as the guy who puts this program together. Dave is hear at U of M studying Industrial and Operations Engineering in the Engineering Global Leadership Honors Program with a degree in Japanese on the side. Last year, Dave wrote the Pops' Constitution and was the all-round gopher. In addition, he played in the trumpet section - and that's where you will find him once again this evening! Hats off to Emily and Steve for all the fun and enjoy the concert!!!

Credit Information

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(George Gershwin, Ira Gershwin)
arr. Robert Russell Bennett
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rev. Frank Cambell-Watson
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"BESS, YOU IS MY WOMAN NOW"

(George Gershwin, Ira Gershwin, Dubose Heyward, And Dorothy Heyward)

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HOW TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE

MICHIGAN POPS ORCHESTRA

Are you a musician interested in performing movie, musical, rock-and-roll and classical music? Do you like the production aspect of shows, such as lighting and sound? Are you an organized person interested in helping manage an orchestra?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, then we are looking for you. Musicians of all levels are encouraged to audition. Performers can be from any school here at U of M, graduate students or alumni.

We are interested in qualified persons to help behind the scenes, both on stage and off. We are looking for qualified stage managers, who run the lights, sound and all other back stage production issues. The Michigan Pops Orchestra also has a governing Board of Directors. Responsibilities include program production, publicity, treasurer, librarian and secretary. Participation in the orchestra is not required to help out on the board.

If you are interested in more information about the opportunities to participate in the Michigan Pops Orchestra, please contact us at:

UAC - Michigan Pops Orchestra

(313) 763-1107

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Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1349

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MICHIGAN POPS ORCHESTRA

would like to express our thanks for making this concert possible to:



A special thanks to:

David Adorente, Maggie St. Clair, Jerry DePuit, Dan DeSena, First Impression Printing, Hammell Music, Kenneth Keisler, Barry LaRue, Ron Ostreicher, President Tuxedo, Terence Ripperda, Kevin Sedatole, and Denise Pilmer Taylor

Thanks to our "Friends of the Pops" members:

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