



PRESS RELEASE

The Grand 1894 Opera House
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GALVESTON'S GRAND 1894 OPERA HOUSE TO PRESENT PORGY AND BESS, MARCH 6

The poignant story of Porgy and Bess makes its premier at The Grand 1894 Opera House with one memorable performance on Saturday, March 6, at 8 pm. This legendary story of a crippled beggar, the headstrong woman he loves and the community that sustains them both is brought to life through George Gershwin's quintessentially American score that melds classical music, popular song, jazz, blues and spirituals.

In this classic Gershwin opera set among the black residents of a fishing village in 1912 South Carolina, Bess - a woman with a disreputable history - tries to break free from her brutish lover Crown after he becomes wanted for murder. The only person willing to overlook her past and offer her shelter is the crippled Porgy. Their relationship is threatened by the disapproval of the townspeople, the presence of her old drug supplier Sportin' Life - and the threatened return of Crown.

Despite conflicting views, George Gershwin's bittersweet love story remains a powerful and controversial mirror of America's evolving attitudes about race, culture and class. Porgy and Bess is based on DuBose Heyward's 1925 novel Porgy and on the 1927 Broadway play of the

same name by DuBose and Dorothy Heyward. Gershwin sketched the opera in 1934 and prepared the orchestra score from September 1934 to September 1935. *Porgy and Bess* was Gershwin's longest and most ambitious creation, but it was not truly successful during his lifetime. Some of the songs had achieved popularity before Gershwin's death in 1937, but the work earned real approval and favor only after the 1940 Theater Guild presentation of a slightly revised version. For years it was performed more frequently in Europe than the U.S. - where it was considered a true American opera.

Sponsored in part by the Adolf and Kaethe Wechsler Memorial Fund, TCA, and Mid America Arts Alliance, you won't want to miss George Gershwin's quintessential American score, all set in the historic intimacy of The Grand.

Ticket prices range from \$18.50 to \$88. Discounts for groups and seniors may be available for select performances. Call for box seat prices. For information about this and other performances scheduled, contact The Grand's box office at 409.765.1894, 800.821.1894, or visit The Grand's website at www.thegrand.com. The Grand 1894 Opera House is located at 2020 Postoffice, in historic downtown Galveston. All major credit cards accepted. The Grand is recognized as "The Official Opera House of the State of Texas."