

# Willy Street Chamber Players: Gershwin & Glazunov

Les Thimmig, soprano saxophone

Friday, July 20, 2018

6:00pm

Immanuel Lutheran Church



**Alexander Glazunov** (1865-1936)

String Quintet in A Major, op. 39 (1892)

Allegro

Scherzo: Allegro moderato

Andante sostenuto

Finale: Allegro moderato

(Bartsch, Amirinazari, Larson, Bridges, Crabb)

ca. 30'

**George Gershwin** (1898-1937)

arr. **Les Thimmig** (b. 1943)

Six arias from "Porgy and Bess" (1935)

Instrumental Setting by Les Thimmig (1976)

I Loves You, Porgy

I Got Plenty O' Nuttin'

Summertime

Interlude: Clara, Clara

My Man's Gone

It Ain't Necessarily So

Bess, You Is My Woman

Interpolation: Oh, I Can't Sit Down

(Thimmig, Bartsch, Amirinazari, Larson, Crabb, Bridges)

ca. 42'

**Les Thimmig** was born March 19, 1943 in Santa Maria, California. His childhood was spent in Joliet, Illinois, where the many opportunities and motivation of the greater Chicago area allowed him to develop his interests in classical performance (clarinet), jazz performance (saxophone), composition (classical and jazz), and conducting. During his collegiate education (B.M. from Eastman, M.M.A. and D.M.A. from Yale; all in composition), he was also active in the free-lance performing areas of New York City, Boston, and the connecting areas. After a year of teaching in Yale's theory department, he assumed the directorship of the composition/theory department of the University of Victoria (B.C.). After two years, he was brought to the University of Wisconsin to direct the composition program.

His numerous appearances as soloist include those with Parnassus, Boston Musica Viva, Dayton Symphony, Milwaukee Symphony, Orquesta Nacional de Venezuela, and New York Philharmonic. His jazz career has included performances with the orchestras of Woody Herman, Lionel Hampton, Oliver Nelson, and Duke Ellington. His compositions have been performed in North and South America, Europe, and Africa. They have been published by G. Schirmer, E. C. Schirmer, Margun, and Turquoise Flame; recorded by CRI, Spectrum, Nonesuch, Stellar, GM, and UW Press.

**\*Excuse our clicks!** Please understand our need to take photos during the concert for marketing purposes.

\*Photos are allowed without flash. Be considerate of those sitting around you. No videos please!

#willystreetchamberplayers



\*Feel free to applaud after entire works or in between movements if you feel compelled.

After the concert, join us for a reception with snacks generously provided by:



**Les Thimmig,**  
**soprano**  
**saxophone**

**Willy Street**  
**Chamber**  
**Players:**

Paran Amirinazari  
Artistic Director, violin

Eleanor Bartsch  
violin

Mark Bridges  
cello

Lindsey Crabb  
cello

Rachel Hauser  
violin/viola

Beth Larson  
violin/viola

# Six Arias from "Porgy and Bess"

## a note from the arranger...

When I arrived at UW in 1971, the Pro Arte Quartet immediately installed my SEVEN PROFILES in their repertoire, performing it rather regularly for the ensuing three-plus years. At that point, they requested a new work, possibly one that would include me as a performer. At this same moment, the group experienced a changing of the guard on the cello chair. And since the departing member (Lowell Creitz) retained his UW professorship as the new member (Parry Karp) entered, the notion of a two-cello quintet that would complement the magnificent Schubert C Major Quintet emerged. While these ideas were being bounced around, I was experiencing some new, still hazy, musical ideas trying to poke through the surface, making me a bit reluctant to jump into a big-scale composing project until these unformed desires were given a period of gestation.

The time seemed right to act on a fantasy in which I had indulged off and on for about ten years: a setting of the arias from PORGY AND BESS that would render me as the "singer" and the string quintet as the "orchestra" (sometimes "chorus"). The idea was to not create an arrangement, medley, mash-up, or any other approach which tampers with the music, but rather to adhere closely to the material as it behaves in the opera. Over the years, these arias have joined Gershwin's teeming catalog of popular songs to the degree that for most listeners, the versions by Nina Simone, Ray Charles, Miles Davis, and many others have supplanted Gershwin's original expressive intentions. A case in point is I Loves You, Porgy.

Beginning with pleading not to be taken away, the second round energizes this feeling, putting a spine in it, taking it to the final statement, which adds a powerful defiance to the fabric: Even though bad stuff is going to happen, nothing changes the love for my man.

Comparable dramatic development obtains in the other arias as well. Full disclosure: While allegiance rested with Gershwin's original, the temptation to occasionally sneak in a little jazz-type embroidery proved to be insurmountable.

The score was completed October, 1976, and our first performance was the following January. As the years unfolded, the subject of reviving the work periodically presented itself, only to be rendered unmanageable by some thing or someone. So if you detect an extra twinkle in my eye this evening, it's because this performance, with my wonderful friends in The Willy Street Chamber Players, is the first in approximately forty years.

Yeahhhhhhh.....

Please enjoy.

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