

George Gershwin (September 26, 1898 – July 11, 1937) was an American composer and pianist. Gershwin's compositions spanned both popular and classical genres, and his most popular melodies are widely known. Among his best known works are the orchestral compositions *Rhapsody in Blue* (1924) and *An American in Paris* (1928), as well as the opera, *Porgy and Bess* (1935). He wrote most of his vocal and theatrical works, including more than a dozen Broadway shows, in collaboration with his elder brother, lyricist Ira Gershwin.

Porgy and Bess is an opera, first performed in 1935, with music by George Gershwin, libretto by DuBose Heyward, and lyrics by Ira Gershwin and DuBose Heyward. It was based on DuBose Heyward's novel *Porgy* and subsequent play of the same title, which he co-wrote with his wife Dorothy Heyward. All three works deal with African-American life in the fictitious Catfish Row (based on the area of Cabbage Row) in Charleston, South Carolina, in the early 1920s. Originally conceived by George Gershwin as an "American folk opera", *Porgy and Bess* premiered in New York in the fall of 1935 and featured an entire cast of classically trained African-American singers—a daring artistic choice at the time. Gershwin chose the African-American musician Eva Jessye as the choral director for the opera.

Dr. Michael Pratt has degrees in music education and music composition from The University of Toledo, The University of Michigan, and Boston University. He studied composition with Pulitzer Prize winning composers Ross Lee Finney and Leslie Bassett at The University of Michigan, and taught music in the public schools for many years in Michigan.

He has sung with The Toledo Choral Society, Toledo Symphony Chorale, Opera!Lenawee, and The University Musical Society Choral Union of The University of Michigan with whom he has performed with The Detroit Symphony Orchestra, The San Francisco Symphony, The Kirov Orchestra, The Russian National Orchestra, The Ann Arbor Symphony, The Lansing Symphony, The Grand Rapids Symphony, The Toledo Symphony, The Birmingham Symphony, The Gabrieli Consort, and The Tallis Scholars.

He has played tuba with The Toledo Symphony, Toledo Concert Band, Toledo Opera, University of Toledo Faculty Brass Quintet, Adrian Chamber Brass, Adrian College Faculty Brass Quintet, The Croswell Opera House, The Adrian Symphony Orchestra and The Adrian City Band.

He has performed with many notable conductors, including, Valery Gergiev, Michael Tilson Thomas, Neeme Jarve, Mikhail Pletnev, Rafael Fruhbeck de Burgos, Leonard Slatkin, John Adams, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, Paul McCreech, Peter Phillips, Catherine Comet, Eric Kunzel, Margaret Hillis, Martin Katz, and John Finley Williamson.

Michael Pratt is a member of ASCAP.

Porgy and Bess

George Gershwin
Arr. by Michael Pratt
for brass septet

Duration 5:15

Highlights

Allegro Moderato $\text{♩} = 120$

Trumpet in B \flat 1
ff

Trumpet in B \flat 2
ff

Trumpet in B \flat 3
ff

Horn in F
ff

Trombone
ff

Euphonium
ff

Tuba
ff

B \flat Tpt. 1
dim.

B \flat Tpt. 2
dim.

B \flat Tpt. 3
dim.

Hn.
dim.

Tbn.
dim.

Euph.
dim.

Tuba
dim.

The score is for a brass septet and is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B \flat major/D \flat minor). The tempo is marked 'Allegro Moderato' with a metronome marking of 120 quarter notes per minute. The first system (measures 1-5) features a powerful fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic across all instruments. The second system (measures 6-11) shows a dynamic shift to *dim.* (diminuendo) for all instruments. The score includes various articulations such as accents and slurs, and is divided into measures by vertical bar lines.