



Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra  
Gershwin Festival 2010 - *POPS*  
“The Travels of George Gershwin”  
Middle School / High School Concert Activities:



#### PRE-CONCERT

Before the concert, students will download a worksheet off the BPO website with links to resources about the composer’s life. Students will use these resources to fill in answers to questions. School teachers are free to provide any preliminary background information about Gershwin that they wish.

Once students have completed the worksheet, either collect and grade, or have the students trade and grade sheets. Have students discuss and share what they learned or found interesting about Gershwin’s life, and if possible listen to some music!

Suggested: *Rhapsody in Blue*, *I Got Rhythm*, *Strike Up the Band*. It is likely that students will recognize these pieces.

#### DAY OF CONCERT

Students will have their “Train Ticket” Scavenger Hunt Sheets which will be completed in Kleinhans. Posters will be displayed throughout the lobby, basement, upstairs, and concert hall, and are based upon travels that the composer took during his life. Students will break up into small groups and visit each “City-themed” poster station in order to fill out their scavenger hunt, and cross off destinations on their train ticket. The Hunt features both questions about Gershwin’s life, as well as questions about American society from 1898 to 1937 (Gershwin’s years of life). After the concert, feel free to use the scavenger hunts in whatever way you would like!

Attached:

Instruction: 1

Pre-concert Worksheet & Answers: 2-3

Gershwin “Train Ticket” Scavenger Hunt & Answers: 4-6

Poster Information: 7-8

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

## BUFFALO PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA *GERSHWIN FESTIVAL 2010*



Using the list of Gershwin websites, look for answers to the questions on this page. Then, bring this completed worksheet to Kleinhans Music Hall in order to receive your Gershwin Festival Train Ticket!

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/episodes/george-gershwin/about-the-composer/65/>

<http://www.classical.net/music/comp.lst/gershwin.php>

<http://www.gershwinfan.com/George.html>

Questions:

1. Where and when was Gershwin born? \_\_\_\_\_
2. As a young boy Gershwin was more interested in playing baseball and roller skating than music. After he heard the Violin being played a talent show, he asked his parents to take Piano lessons. What was his first music related job? \_\_\_\_\_
3. In 1924, Gershwin premiered a piece that he had written in only one month's time! This piece was unique because it combined the styles of pop music and classical music into one. What was this piece called? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Although Gershwin had made it big in the Classical music world, he also wrote very many Broadway Musicals which were also successful. Can you name a few of these?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. In 1928, Gershwin took a trip to Paris, France. While there he met with the famous French composer Maurice Ravel, who he hoped to take lessons from. Ravel asked him "Why do you want to be a second-rate Ravel when you are already a first-rate Gershwin?" As a result of this trip Gershwin composed a "tone poem," a type of piece that tries to transport the listener to another time or place. What was the name of this piece, and what special instruments did it use?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Where did George and his brother Ira move in 1930, and what business did they begin writing music for? \_\_\_\_\_
7. In 1935 Gershwin wrote his first Opera, (like a musical, but there is no spoken words- everything is sung!) which was set in the poor communities of the American South. What was the name of this piece?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Sadly, Gershwin developed a Brain Tumor and died in 1937. Fortunately, you can still hear much of his music on TV in commercials and shows. Can you name somewhere where you may have heard his music? \_\_\_\_\_

## Answers to Worksheet Questions

1. *(Brooklyn, NY; 9/26/1898)*
2. *(Song-plugger on "Tin Pan Alley")*
3. *(Rhapsody in Blue)*
4. *(Strike Up the Band, Let Them Eat Cake, Lady Be Good...)*
5. *(An American in Paris; Taxi Horns)*
6. *(Hollywood; Movies)*
7. *(Porgy and Bess)*
8. *(American Airlines, H&R Block, Visa, When Harry Met Sally, Mr. Holland's Opus)*

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

	<h1>ADMIT ONE</h1>	
<b>Gershwin Festival</b> <b>November 2010</b> <b>Buffalo Philharmonic Railways</b>		Brooklyn, NY [ ] New York, NY [ ] Paris, France [ ] Charleston, So. Carolina [ ] Los Angeles, California [ ]

## GERSHWIN SCAVENGER HUNT

Using the worksheet, explore the various poster stations located around Kleinhans Music Hall, and use the information you read to answer the questions about Gershwin's life, and the society he lived in.

1. What is George Gershwin's birth name? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What was one of Gershwin's favorite sports when he lived out west? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Who wrote the words to Porgy and Bess? \_\_\_\_\_
4. An American in Paris was not the only tone poem that Gershwin composed as a result of traveling. What was another example? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What is one building in New York City named after George Gershwin's theatrical greatness?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What was the name of Gershwin's first Opera? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What is significant (relating to Gershwin's life) about each city that you are visiting?

Brooklyn, NY \_\_\_\_\_

New York, New York \_\_\_\_\_

Paris, France \_\_\_\_\_

Charleston, South Carolina \_\_\_\_\_

Los Angeles, California \_\_\_\_\_

**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

8. How much did a box of Kellogg's Corn Flakes cost...

in 1898? \_\_\_\_\_ in 1924? \_\_\_\_\_ in 1937? \_\_\_\_\_

9. How much did a bottle of Coca Cola cost...

in 1898? \_\_\_\_\_ in 1924? \_\_\_\_\_ in 1937? \_\_\_\_\_

10. How much did a Hershey Chocolate Bar cost...

in 1898? \_\_\_\_\_ in 1924? \_\_\_\_\_ in 1937? \_\_\_\_\_

11. How much did a dozen eggs cost...

in 1898? \_\_\_\_\_ in 1924? \_\_\_\_\_ in 1937? \_\_\_\_\_

12. How much did a half-gallon of milk cost...

in 1898? \_\_\_\_\_ in 1924? \_\_\_\_\_ in 1937? \_\_\_\_\_

13. How much did a postage stamp cost...

in 1898? \_\_\_\_\_ in 1924? \_\_\_\_\_ in 1937? \_\_\_\_\_

14. What important celebrity was born...

in 1898? \_\_\_\_\_ in 1924? \_\_\_\_\_

in 1937? \_\_\_\_\_

15. What important *Music* event happened...

in 1898? \_\_\_\_\_

in 1924? \_\_\_\_\_

in 1937? \_\_\_\_\_

16. What Important *national* event happened...

in 1898? \_\_\_\_\_

in 1924? \_\_\_\_\_

in 1937? \_\_\_\_\_

17. Who was the president of the United States...

in 1898? \_\_\_\_\_

in 1924? \_\_\_\_\_

in 1937? \_\_\_\_\_

*We hope you enjoy the Concert!*

## ANSWERS TO GERSHWIN SCAVENGER HUNT

1. Jacob Gershowitz
2. Tennis
3. Dubose Heyward
4. *Cuban Overture (Rumba)*
5. Gershwin Theatre, Gershwin Hotel
6. *Blue Monday*
7. **NY:** Hometown for much of his life; very popular on Broadway  
**Paris:** Traveled there to meet Ravel, inspiration for *An American in Paris*  
**Charleston:** Setting for *Porgy and Bess*  
**LA:** Lived here while working in Hollywood, place of death, due to Brain Tumor  
**Brooklyn:** Born here
8. **Kellogg's:** 1898: 10 cents; 1924: 8 cents; 1937: 13 cents/ 2 packages
9. **Coca Cola:** 1898: 5 cents; 1924: 5 cents; 1937: 5 cents
10. **Hershey Bar:** 1898: 2 cents; 1924: 5 cents; 1937: 5 cents
11. **Dozen Eggs:** 1898: 23 cents; 1924: 78 cents; 1937: 45 cents
12. **Half Gallon of Milk:** 1898: 14 cents; 1924: 27 cents; 1937: 25 cents
13. **Postage Stamp:** 1898: 2 cents; 1924: 2 cents; 1937: 3 cents
14. **Celebrity Births:** 1898: CS Lewis (Author); 1924: Jimmy Carter (President) 1937: Jack Nicholson (Actor)
15. **Music events:** 1898: Victor Herbert's *"The Fortune Teller"* opens on Broadway; 1924: *"Lady, Be Good"* (Gershwin) opens on Broadway; 1937: Fred Astaire Singing *"They Can't Take That Away From Me"* (by George and Ira Gershwin) reaches fourth on the national charts.
16. **National events:** 1898: First Gas-Powered Car sold; 1924: Macy's Thanksgiving Parade held for the first time; 1937: Pilot Amelia Earhart mysteriously disappears
17. **President of the United States:** 1898: William McKinley, 1924: Calvin Coolidge, 1937: Franklin D. Roosevelt

## INFORMATION FOR POSTERS USED IN SCAVENGER HUNT-

DISPLAYED THROUGHOUT KLEINHANS

Underlined/Highlighted Text is information is required to answer questions in the Scavenger Hunt Page.  
Other information is extra.

### BROOKLYN:

-Born to a Russian immigrant family

-Birth name: Jacob Gershowitz

-Took a job as a song-plugger in Tin Pan Alley at age 15

-Soon moved to a job as Rehearsal Pianist for Broadway Shoes and Revues

-First song: "When You Want 'Em You Can't Get 'Em, When You've Got 'Em, You Don't Want 'Em."

-Kellogg's Corn Flakes: 10 cents; Coca Cola: 5 cents; Hershey Bar: 2 cents; Dozen Eggs: 23 cents; Half Gallon of Milk: 14 cents; Postage Stamp: 2 cents; Celebrity Births: CS Lewis (Author); Music Events: Victor Herbert's "The Fortune Teller" opens on Broadway; National Events: First Gas-Powered Car Sold; President of the United States: William McKinley

### NEW YORK:

-First Opera composed in 1922- "Blue Monday"

-Paul Whiteman's "An Experiment in Modern Music" in 1924 at NY's Aeolian Hall. Rhapsody in Blue premiered with Gershwin as soloist. The famous Clarinet "sweep" at the beginning of the piece was not written, meant as a joke by Clarinetist Ross Gorman

-Became very popular on Broadway throughout his life. Many songs remain popular today.

-Gershwin Theatre named in honor of George and Ira in 1983

-Lived in an apartment on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, near Ira so the two could collaborate.

-Said to be the highest paid American composer ever.

-Kellogg's Corn Flakes: 8 cents; Coca Cola: 5 cents; Hershey Bar: 5 cents; Dozen Eggs: 78 cents; Half Gallon of Milk: 27 cents; Postage Stamp: 2 cents; Celebrity Births: Jimmy Carter (Future President); Music Events: Gershwin's "Lady, Be Good" opens on Broadway; National Events: Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade held for the first time; President of the United States: Calvin Coolidge

### PARIS:

-*An American in Paris*, which was commissioned by the New York Philharmonic, was inspired by the trip that Gershwin took here. Gershwin brought back the taxi horns played in the premiere.

-Cuban Overture (Rumba) was also inspired by travel- but this time to Cuba

- Numerous French composers also used Jazz and Blues themes in their works. Among them; Darius Milhaud, Claude Debussy, Maurice Ravel
- While in Paris Gershwin met famous composers Stravinsky, Ravel, and Nadia Boulanger. Although he had hoped to study with one of them, they all told him that he was fine as he was. Stravinsky commented that “Based on how much you make in a year, you should be teaching me.”

## CHARLESTON:

- Gershwin’s First Full-scale Opera was Porgy and Bess
- Based on the Book “Porgy” by DuBose Heyward
- Heyward also wrote the libretto (words) for the opera
- One of the most popular songs is “Summertime” which has been recorded over 17000 times!
- George and Ira spent the summer of 1934 in South Carolina in order to better understand the characteristic musical style of the south.

## LOS ANGELES:

- Gershwin enjoyed playing Tennis with fellow composer Arnold Schoenberg
- Kellogg’s Corn Flakes: 13 cents for two packages; Coca Cola: 5 cents; Hershey Bar: 5 cents; Dozen Eggs: 45 cents; Half Gallon of Milk: 25 cents; Postage Stamp: 3 cents; Celebrity Births: Jack Nicholson (Actor); Music Events: Gershwin’s “They Can’t Take That Away From Me” hits 4<sup>th</sup> in the National Charts; National Events: Pilot Amelia Earhart mysteriously disappears; President of the United States: Franklin D. Roosevelt
- Wrote scores for Motion pictures including “Shall we Dance” and “A Damsel in Distress.” Many of the individual songs from these motion pictures are also still popular today.
- Sadly, this home was to be his last, as he died here in 1937, of a brain tumor.

NOTE: All activities and worksheets for the Friday Morning concerts were designed by music students from SUNY Oneonta and SUNY Potsdam as part of a project to engage older students in classical music. Thank you Michelle Fecio, Matthew Marco and Kelcie Hanaka.