

## What's Next?

**March/April: Paris Bohème (Bohemian Paris) with the Rawson Duo** ~ On Friday and Sunday, March 30 and April 1 at 2 pm the Rawson Duo will offer a taste of free spirited Paris in an afternoon unusual, jazzy, unconventional and perhaps a little hedonistic, musical chic of the 1920s and 30s with works by Bohuslav Martinu, Gabriel Pierné, Germain Tailleferre, and others.

**Beyond that?** . . . as the fancy strikes (check those emails and website)

**Reservations:** Seating is limited and arranged through advanced paid reservation, \$22 (unless otherwise noted). Contact Alan or Sandy Rawson, email [rawsonduo@gmail.com](mailto:rawsonduo@gmail.com) or call 379-3449. Notice of event details, dates and times when scheduled will be sent via email or ground mail upon request. Be sure to be on the Rawsons' mailing list. For more information, visit:

[www.rawsonduo.com](http://www.rawsonduo.com)

### Web Sites and other items of interest related to today's program

[www.dipity.com/timeline/George-Gershwin/list](http://www.dipity.com/timeline/George-Gershwin/list) ~ an interview with Paul Whiteman discussing Gershwin and Rhapsody premiere

[www.youtube.com/tch?v=BFFNGQiv9Yk](http://www.youtube.com/tch?v=BFFNGQiv9Yk) ~ rare radio interview with Ferde Grofe (be patient with the colorful introduction)

[www.juilliard.edu/alumni/spot\\_0503.html](http://www.juilliard.edu/alumni/spot_0503.html) ~ interesting article about Kay Smith

[www.kayswift.com](http://www.kayswift.com) ~ Kay Smith web site, composer and song writer, had long romantic and influential association with Gershwin

[www.wsj.com](http://www.wsj.com) ~ (Wall Street Journal) enter search words "rhapsody imbued" to find interesting article and book review by Joseph Epstein

*George Gershwin, An Intimate Portrait* by Walter Rimler, University of Illinois, 204 pages. Chapter 8 excerpt can be found at [wjs.com](http://wjs.com) (enter search words: "gershwin rimler")

### HANGING OUT AT THE RAWSONS (take a look around)

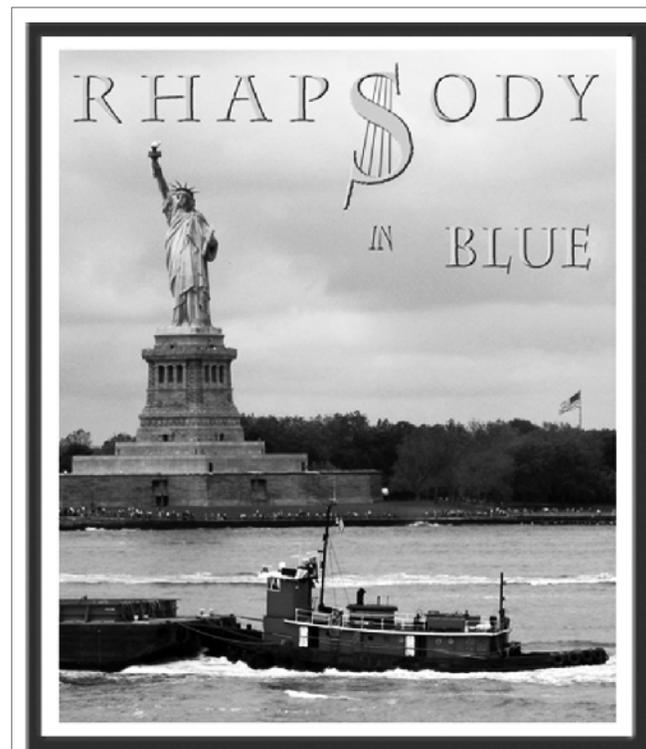


**Harold Nelson** has had a lifelong passion for art, particularly photo images and collage. It sustained him through years of working in the federal bureaucracy with his last sixteen in Washington DC. He started using his current collage technique in 2004, two years before retirement from his first career and his move from Virginia to Port Townsend. His art is shown frequently on the Peninsula, and he is currently showing at Northwind Arts Center and the Northwind Showcase gallery.

[www.hnelsonart.com](http://www.hnelsonart.com)

*About the Cover: Liberty Island from the Staten Island Ferry, June, 2009*

## Rawson Duo Concert Series, 2011-12



a violin and piano tribute  
to George Gershwin

At the home of Alan and Sandy Rawson  
10318 Rhody Drive, Chimacum WA  
Friday, Sunday, and Tuesday (February 24, 26, & 28), 2 pm

## The Rawson Duo

Specializing in Romantic and early twentieth-century works, the **Rawson Duo** has given numerous recitals on college campuses and community performing arts series across the United States and Canada. The Rawsons now reside in Chamacum where they perform throughout the year in the intimate setting of their home located on 7.5 acres, bringing to life rarely heard works celebrated with warm hospitality.

Violinist **Alan Rawson** first pursued his music interests in his junior year in high school as a self-taught folk guitarist, recorder player, and madrigal singer. Classical Violin studies were begun at Cañada Junior College in Redwood City California, since their program did not include Country and Western fiddling. He received his Bachelor of Music and Master of Arts degrees from San Francisco State University and completed his doctorate degree at the University of Colorado in Boulder in violin performance studying with Oswald Lehnert while developing a passionate interest in Rocky Mountain cycling and cross country skiing. He has served on the music faculties of Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota and the University of Idaho in Moscow, and has recently retired from Minnesota State University Moorhead where he directed the University Orchestra and taught upper strings. He was concertmaster of the Fargo-Moorhead Symphony for twenty years and appeared as a featured orchestral soloist several times performing works by Tchaikowsky, Mozart, Sibelius, and Bruch, among others.

Alan has a passionate interest in exploring the music of past great composers, now all but lost to obscurity, and he is actively researching, locating and scanning public domain scores, making these freely available to the internet community worldwide.

A native of Fargo, ND, **Sandy Rawson** (pianist, organist, harpsichordist) completed her Bachelor of Music degree in piano performance at the University of Minnesota and continued her studies at the Musik Akademie in Vienna, Austria. During her long tenure in the Fargo Moorhead area, she was a highly active accompanist and large ensemble pianist performing with all the major organizations including opera, symphony, choral, ballet, universities and public schools. She frequently appeared on faculty and guest artist recitals at the three local universities, NDSU, MSUM, and Concordia College. An active church organist from the age of 14, she held the post of organist at the First Congregational Church in Fargo for 25 years. She currently is the organist for Sequim Community Church and piano accompanist for Peninsula Chamber Singers.

Sandy's love of music is equaled by her love for cooking. A professionally trained chef, having lived several years in Europe and Japan, international cuisine has been a lifelong passion. Today's reception celebrates the Russian-Jewish immigrant:

## ЗАКУСКИ

(ZAKUSKI ~ *Russian hors d'oeuvres*)

Buterbrodi ~ *assorted canapés*

Salat Oliviyev Tartaletkakh ~ *Russian salad in tartlets*

Biskvitnyi Abrikosovyi Torta ~ *apricot torte*

Eir Kichelach ~ *Ashkenazic egg cookies*

Glazirovanniye Sirki ~ *chocolate-covered cheese confections*

Tea Biscuits / Mushroom Rugelach

Medovaia Kovrizhka ~ *old Russian honey cake*

George Gershwin  
(1898-1937)

Prelude No. 1, arranged by **Jascha Heifetz** (1901-1987)

Selections from *American in Paris*  
sketches by **Jascha Heifetz** / completed by **Ayke Agus**

Selections from *Porgy and Bess*  
transcriptions by **Jascha Heifetz**

*Summertime / A Woman is a Sometime Thing*  
*My Man's Gone Now*  
*Bess, You Is My Woman Now*  
*It Ain't Necessarily So*  
*Tempo di Blues\**

~ interval ~

a Rawson Duo Meddling

*Stairway to Paradise / Nice Work if You Can Get It*  
*Let's Call the Whole Thing Off / Embraceable You*  
*A Foggy Day / Fascinating Rhythm*

Rhapsody in Blue  
Transcribed for violin and piano by  
**Gregory Stone** (1900-1991)

\*based on *Picnics Is Alright* and  
*There's a Boat Dat's Leavin' Soon for New York*

**Gregory Stone** was born in Odessa, Russia in 1900. He became a pianist and composer of note and appears to have migrated to the United States a few years after the 1917 Russian Revolution. He settled in New York where he created arrangements for Broadway shows and the T.B. Harms Publishing House. He toured as conductor of The Ice Capades Orchestra, a popular touring ice show of the 1940s and 1950s, where he met his wife, Ingebord who was a principal skater in the show at the time.

He is best known as a composer of film scores and stock music who entered American film with *Hollywood Boulevard* (1936) at Paramount where his notable credits include *The Big Broadcast of 1937* (also 1936), *Easy to Take* and *Souls at Sea in 1937*, and *Her Jungle Love*, *In Old Mexico*, and *Ride a Crooked Mile* in 1938. That year, Stone moved to Columbia Pictures with occasional work for other studios scoring *Girls School* (1938), *Blondie Brings up Baby* (1939), *Her First Romance* (1940), *The Boy from Stalingrad* (1943), *Carnegie Hall* (1947, songs), *Jivaro* (1954) and *The Benny Goodman Story* (1955) with the song "Let's Dance." He was nominated for Music Scoring Awards, Best Score in 1938 with Morris Soloff for *Girls School*.

In addition to his film work, he published numerous arrangements and original works for solo piano and various instruments, performed by the leading soloists of his day. Most notable among his 16 publications for violin and piano is his complete transcription of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*.

**Reno Philharmonic Years** ~ Stone, an exotic figure with a larger-than-life show-business personality, made a substantial fortune from what he considered to be less prestigious work in commercial ventures. Becoming friendly with many studio musicians while working in Hollywood, he accumulated an impressive orchestral library, and was ready for the challenge of founding a symphony orchestra. Reno became Stone's base of operations in 1967, and the Reno Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra was established two years later.



From its humble beginning the Reno Philharmonic has become Northern Nevada's most prominent performing arts organization. The orchestra's first Sunday afternoon concert was an all Gershwin affair with pianist Ronald Williams performing Gershwin's Concerto in F. The concert, sporting ten numbers before intermission, was typical give-them-their-moneys-worth Stone programming. The orchestra performed on Tuesday nights, when casino musicians were available, since the casino showrooms were dark.

Stone's early work was met with successes and a few misses. He had a large fan base of support and an almost equally large number of people who found his approach to the symphony business to be more well-intentioned than strategic. His programming, which regularly included ten or more works on each half, lasting hours, were more pops based and less symphonic. Stone's Hollywood connections helped promote the fledgling orchestra. In the first few seasons, many Hollywood guests such as the concert-pianist and darling of MGM movie musicals, Jose Iturbi graced the stage at the Pioneer Center in Reno. Stone retired from the Reno Philharmonic and moved to Spain in 1979.

~ adapted from [www.renophil.com](http://www.renophil.com)



Time Magazine  
Monday, Jul. 20, 1925, Music: Gershwin Bros

Maneuvering around two grand pianos which took up most of the available floor space of a small Manhattan apartment, a young Jew last week went about the business of packing a suitcase. Old newspapers—the inseparable, useless adjuncts of this operation—lay here and there in crumpled disorder, but two, each containing an item which had been circled with a pencil mark, reposed on a table. The first item related how Composer George Gershwin, famed jazzbo, had recently returned from Europe; the second stated that this Gershwin, when he had finished the piano concerto which Dr. Walter Damrosch has commissioned him to write for the New York Symphony Orchestra (TIME, May 4), will compose the score of a new musical comedy for the producers of *Lady, Be Good*. Soprano excitement abruptly galvanized the telephone at the young man's elbow: he began to address its black aperture. "Yes," he said, "this is Gershwin. . . . No, no, it's too hot. . . . I'm going away for the weekend. . . . I can't see anyone" Smiling, he hung up the receiver, tossed a last striped shirt into his bag. It was sometimes a nuisance, but he could not honestly pretend that it bored him, this growing public interest in his movements, his past, his plans.

George Gershwin, 27, was born in Brooklyn. At an early age, he contributed to the music of a rickety, rollicking, tenement street, at first with infantile muling, later with a stout, pubescent chirrup. He skinned his knees in the gutters of this street; he nourished himself smeamily with its bananas; he broke its dirty windows and eluded its brass-and-blue clothed curator. When he was 13, his mother purchased a piano.

It was not that Mrs. Gershwin detected any seeds of musical talent in her grubby young son. She bought the piano because her sister-in-law had one. There it stood, big and shiny; it had cost a lot of money, and no one in the Gershwin family—not even Ira, the oldest, who was certainly a smart boy— could make music on it. George would have to learn. For some time the neighbors suffered; then they advised him to study in Europe. His first teacher died when he was still torturing Chopin's preludes. Max Rosen, famed violinist, told him he would never be a musician. When he was 15, he tried to write a song. It began decently in F, but ran off into G, where it hid behind the black keys, twiddling its fingers at Gershwin. Discouraged, he went to work as a song-plugger for a music publisher.

He plugged songs on tin-pan pianos— those renegade instruments that stay up late, every night, in the back rooms of cafes, in the smoky corners of third-string night clubs, till their keys are yellow, and their tone is as hard as peroxidized hair. Gershwin's fingers found a curious music in them. He made it hump along with a twang and a shuffle, hunch its shoulders and lick its lips. Diners applauded. "What's the name of that tune, honey?" asked a lady of Gershwin one night.

"No name," said Gershwin. "It has no name."

The ditty in question, afterward entitled *I Was So Young*, and *You Were So Beautiful*, became Gershwin's first hit. Within a few years, he had written *Swanee*, *I'll Build a Stairway to Paradise*, *Yankee Doodle Bines*, *The Nashville Nightingale*, *Do It Again*, *I Won't Say I Will*, *Somebody Loves Me*, *Lady, Be Good*, *Fascinating Rhythm*. Last year, he composed his famed *Rhapsody in Blue*, a jazz concerto constructed after Liszt. It took him three weeks to write it. He played it through twice with Conductor Paul Whiteman's celebrated jazz band. It was acclaimed in Carnegie Hall by a huge audience, hailed by daring critics as "the finest piece of music ever written in the U. S." Conductor Willem Van Hoogstraten asked Gershwin to arrange it for a Symphony Orchestra. Next season he will play his concerto with the New York Symphony in Manhattan, Baltimore, Washington, Philadelphia. It is to be more serious than the *Rhapsody*, unconventional but in strict form. In the winter, he expects to write still another musical comedy, in collaboration with his brother. Ira Gershwin writes the words to George's songs. Quieter than his more brilliant brother, he once tried to be an author. He spent two days polishing a poem, submitted it to a magazine. It was accepted. Ira Gershwin received a check for \$1.00, abandoned literature, took to composing words for George.

**Jascha Heifetz** was the leading figure among the extraordinary group of Russian Jews who dominated violin playing in the second and third quarters of the twentieth century. As a technician he had no superior, and, of all the artists of his time and later, only two or three could even offer a challenge to his electrifying precision of execution. His diamond-point tone and quick vibrato afforded his playing a clarity of line that some felt was almost too perfect, even cold. Most conductors and other violinists -- and audiences -- felt differently and a Heifetz concert inevitably drew sell-out crowds.

Heifetz was born in Vilna, where his father Ruvim was a violinist in the city theatre. When he was three, his father bought for him a quarter-size instrument and gave him beginning instruction. By the age of five, Heifetz had advanced enough to enter the Vilna Conservatory where he began instruction under Elias Malkin. Only a year later, Heifetz made his first public appearance performing the Mendelssohn "Violin Concerto." The six-year-old was so successful that offers for other appearances came from numerous other venues in Russia and he was hailed as a real prodigy.



When Leopold Auer, then a famous professor at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, came to Vilna in 1909, he was persuaded by Malkin to listen to Heifetz. After hearing him in Mendelssohn and Paganini, Auer embraced him and predicted for him a splendid future, urging him to come to St. Petersburg and become his pupil.

Ruvim Heifetz resigned his position, sold the family belongings, and took his son to St. Petersburg, but Auer initially failed to recognize the boy and refused him admittance to his home. By the time Auer realized his error, the Conservatory entrance deadline had passed and Jascha had to enroll in the class of an assistant. Six months later, however, Heifetz was able enter Auer's class, and thereafter his progress was astounding.

During an appearance at the International Exposition in Odessa, the reception accorded Heifetz was so explosive a police escort was needed afterward. Concerts throughout Europe followed immediately and, at an appearance with the Berlin Philharmonic in 1914, conductor Artur Nikisch declared that he had never heard violin playing such as his.

Heifetz' American debut took place at Carnegie Hall in 1917, eliciting such observations as "only the molten gold of Fritz Kreisler can be conjured up in comparison" (Herbert F. Peysner) and "He is a modern miracle" (Pitts Sanborn). The ensuing year brought triumph after triumph, with critics vying with each other to offer the most extravagant superlatives. A period of transition a few years later brought some critical reservations as Heifetz sought to move away from the overt emotionalism of his Russian training and become a more objective player. By the mid-1920s, however, a balance had been struck and once again accolades flew as critics and audiences noted a new, more mature approach to his music.

Heifetz became an American citizen, settled in California, and enjoyed the benefit of a long-term recording contract with RCA, amassing a sizeable discography over the years. Throughout his career, Heifetz favored gut strings, perhaps to temper the fine-edged aggressiveness of his attack and the enormous strength of his bowing arm. Early recordings of concertos, made mostly overseas, were gradually redone -- though not supplanted -- with American orchestras and in improved sound. Nonetheless, many of the earlier releases, despite their having been done in short takes required by 78 discs, still compel attention for their unsurpassed mastery.

*Erik Eriksson ~ barnesandnobel.com*