



**THE DALLAS OPERA
MEDIA RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

FEBRUARY 1, 2008

Contact: Suzanne Calvin

214-443-1014/suzannec@dallasopera.org

**THE DALLAS OPERA PROUDLY PRESENTS
INDIRA MAHAJAN AND GORDON HAWKINS IN
GEORGE GERSHWIN'S
PORGY & BESS**

**THE FOURTH PRODUCTION OF THE
51ST INTERNATIONAL SEASON**

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**DALLAS OPERA DEBUT OF WAYNE MARSHALL!**

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**Performance Underwriters Kimberly-Clark Corporation,
National Endowment for the Arts and TACA**

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**Friday, February 22, 2008, 7:30 p.m.  
The Music Hall at Fair Park**

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DALLAS, FEBRUARY 1, 2008 — **The Dallas Opera** is headed to “Catfish Row” South Carolina for the fourth production of the company’s **51st International Season**. **George Gershwin’s** unparalleled American masterpiece, **PORGY & BESS**, opens **Friday, February 22, 2008 at 7:30 p.m. in the Music Hall at Fair Park**.

This will mark the first of FIVE eagerly anticipated performances starring the remarkable soprano **Indira Mahajan** as Bess (the 2004 winner of the Maria Callas Debut Artist of the Year Award) and internationally renowned baritone **Gordon Hawkins** as

Porgy, a role he first tackled in Australia at the age of 26!

PORGY & BESS, a co-production of The Dallas Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Cleveland Opera, Los Angeles Music Center Opera, Greater Miami Opera, San Diego Opera, San Francisco Opera, Seattle Opera and the Wang Center for the Performing Arts) will be repeated on **Sunday, February 24th** at 2:00 p.m., followed by performances on **Tuesday, February 26th; Thursday, February 28th and Saturday, March 1st** beginning at 7:30 p.m.

Dancers appear in cooperation with **Dallas Black Dance Theatre, Ann Williams, Artistic Director.**

A portion of the proceeds from ticket sales for the Thursday evening performance will benefit the **United Negro College Fund.**

Single tickets are on sale for **\$15 to \$199**, if purchased in advance. **FLEX packages** for the final three productions of the season (including SALOME) range from just under **\$75 to \$1,020.**

The Dallas Opera is tremendously excited to present – at long last – the company debut of one of the world’s great keyboard artists and conductors, British-born **Wayne Marshall**, who will lead **The Dallas Opera Orchestra** in the Depression-Era work many believe to be America’s greatest contribution to opera.

Last staged by The Dallas Opera in 1995, **PORGY & BESS** (by George Gershwin, Dubose and Dorothy Heyward and Ira Gershwin) is an extraordinary collaborative effort that includes scenery and costumes created specifically for this production by half a dozen opera companies from Seattle to Houston.

The artistic collaboration is reflected onstage, as well, with a phenomenal African-American ensemble cast **staged by Broadway veteran Hope Clark** and headed by Mr. Hawkins (who recently earned a rave review from *New York Times* Classical Music Critic Anthony Tommasini for his “powerful singing” that “nearly stole the show all evening.”) and Ms. Mahajan (praised by Music Critic Tim Smith of *The Washington Post* for singing this role with “brilliance and ardor”).

The cast includes **Lester Lynch** as the menacing Crown and **Angela Renee Simpson** as Serena, both of whom sang these roles in Dallas in 1995; **Victor Ryan Robertson** in the coveted role of Sportin’ Life; **Janice Chandler-Eteme** as Clara; **Leon Williams** in the role of Jake and **Bonita Hyman** as Maria, all making their Dallas Opera debuts.

Other members of the ensemble: **Ivan Tolbert** as Mingo; **François Dewberry** as Robbins; **Donald Jones** as Jim; **Keron Jackson** as Frazier; **Angela Owens** as Annie; **Elias Hendricks** as Crab Man; **Marilyn Walton** as Lily; **Kristian Roberts** as Strawberry Woman; **Fred Wilmer** as Peter; **Bobby L. Tinnion** as the Undertaker; **Charles Bogan** as Nelson; **John Victor Allen** as the Detective; **Keith Kubal** as the Policeman and **Bill Lengfelder** (The Dallas Opera's Fight Choreographer) as the Coroner.

Roger Boykin sets a jaunty tone for the evening as pianist Jasbo Brown.

Set on "Catfish Row" (a fictitious section of Charleston, South Carolina), **PORGY & BESS** teems with unforgettable lyrics and melodies that entered the American popular music lexicon long, long ago; including "Summertime," "Bess, You Is My Woman Now," "It Ain't Necessarily So," and "I Got Plenty o' Nuttin'."

Composed in 1935, this self-proclaimed "folk opera" is comic, poignant and action-packed in its exploration of the lives of the working poor during one of the most difficult economic periods in American history.

"There are a lot of classic scenes and moments in the piece," explains **Maestro Wayne Marshall**. "It's *not* a musical; it's been a big mistake to concede that point. I suppose the error is due to its association with Broadway when the opera was first performed. It's a classic *opera* in the same vein as any Verdi or Mozart or Strauss opera.

"It presents a typical situation: two people come together against many odds. There's a love story and a tragedy, there's joy, there's sadness, there's excitement – it's all right here!

"When you think about what George Gershwin went through in order to produce this work: He went down to South Carolina to absorb the culture down there; a culture so well-captured in this piece that I consider it Gershwin's masterpiece," adds Mr. Marshall. "No question about it."

The scenic design is by **Ken Foy** with costumes by the late **Judy Dearing**. Lighting is by Tony Award winner **Ken Billington**, wig and make-up design by rising star **David Zimmerman**, and choreography by stage director **Hope Clark**.

The dancers from Dallas Black Dance Theatre are: **Katriccia Eaglin; Richard A. Freeman, Jr.; Allyne D. Gartell; Michael Jackson, Jr.; Alicia Pegues; Nycole Ray and Melissa M. Young.**

An all African American chorus, made up of regular members of **The Dallas Opera Chorus** as well as many new voices discovered in local auditions, is being prepared by **Chorus Master Alexander Rom**.

All five performances of **PORGY & BESS** are generously underwritten by **Kimberly-Clark Corporation, the National Endowment for the Arts and TACA**.

Performances will take place February 22, February 24(m), 26, 28, and March 1, 2008 in the Music Hall at Fair Park. All evening performances will begin at 7:30 PM and the Sunday matinee at 2:00 PM. For tickets and information, please call 214-443-1000 or visit dallasopera.org.

Key Bios:

WAYNE MARSHALL* (*Conductor*)

Oldham, Lancashire, UK. Internationally renowned organist, conductor and pianist. Organist-in-Residence, Manchester's Bridgewater Hall, BBC Music Magazine's "Artist of the Year Award" (1998).

Highlights: *Porgy & Bess* (BBC Proms Gershwin centenary tribute, Washington National Opera, Rotterdam Philharmonic); *West Side Story* (Bregenz Festival); *Firebrand of Florence* (Central German Radio Symphony Orchestra); *Guys & Dolls* (Austrian Radio Symphony); appeared in the BBC Big Band Ellington celebration; conducted at the "Prom in the Park," Sage, Gateshead; and *Wonderful Town* (Austrian Radio Symphony, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Santa Cecilia, Monte Carlo Philharmonic). Other musical activities include improvisation, jazz, radio and television presentations, and composition. In 2004, Wayne Marshall was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by Bournemouth University in recognition of his longstanding relationship with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. He has recorded for several labels, including two acclaimed Gershwin discs with Aalborg Symphony and solo piano releases that include *I Got Rhythm* and the *Gershwin Song Book* (winner of the 1998 ECHO award) and his *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis* were published in 2001 in the Faber New Choral Works series.

HOPE CLARKE (*Stage Director/Choreographer*)

Washington, D.C.

Highlights: Tony Award and Drama Desk nominations for best choreography in *Jelly's Last Jam* (1992) and recipient of the Dramalogue Award, the Joseph Calloway Award and the NAACP Image Award for the same piece; director/choreographer for *Porgy & Bess* (originated at Houston Grand Opera, co-produced at The Dallas Opera and other notable companies); choreographer for numerous works, most recently, Tony Kushner's *Caroline, or Change* (2004, New York Shakespeare Festival and on Broadway) and *The Odyssey* (Willow Cabin Theatre); directed *Porgy & Bess*, *Così fan tutte*, *The Medium* and *The Telephone* and (Opera Ebony, NYC); *Frida* (American Musical Theater); directed and choreographed *The Gathering* (New Professional Theater); *Hallelujah Baby* (York Theater) and an all-dance version of *Porgy & Bess*, using the music of Miles Davis and Dick Hyman, for Dallas Black Dance Theatre; collaborated with writer/director George C. Wolf creating dance and staging for works including *Spunk*, *The Colored Museum* and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*; principal dancer for the Katherine Dunham Company and the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater; as an actress Ms. Clarke has appeared in numerous television roles, "A Piece of the Action," starring Bill Cosby and Sidney Poitier and "A Book of Numbers" with Philip Michael Thomas and Raymond St. Jacques; stage credits include leading roles in *Don't Bother Me I Can't Cope*, *Grind*, *Purlie* and *Hallelujah Baby*.

KEN FOY (*Scenic Design*)

Highlights: World premiere of Thomas Pasatieri's opera *The Three Sisters*; Judith Viorst's *Happy Birthday and Other Public Humiliations*; *Cole* (Los Angeles); sets for the American Opera Center production of Handel's *Xerxes* in addition to numerous productions for the Juilliard Theatre Center, Manhattan Theatre Club, Wolf Trap, Long Wharf, Goodspeed, Berkshire Theatre Festival, La Jolla Playhouse and Lyric Opera of Chicago. On Broadway, he has designed productions of *Candida* (starring Joanne Woodward), *Macbeth* with Nicole Williamson, David Merrick's *Oh, Kay!* and a Tony Award winning revival of *Gypsy*.

JUDY DEARING (*Costume Design*)

Highlights: Broadway credits include *Shimada* (1992), *Checkmates*, *For Colored Girls*, *The Poison Tree*, *What the Wine Sellers Buy*, *Death and the King's Horseman*, *The Mighty Gents*, *Lamp-post Reunion* and *Once on This Island* (nominated for a 1991 Tony Award). Off-Broadway credits include *The Legacy of Williams & Walker*, *Moms*, *Trick*, *Ma Rose*, and *Split-Second*. Her designs for the New York Shakespeare Festival include *The Forbidden City*, *Jonah*, and *The Dance and the Railroad*. She has been a resident costume designer for the University of Texas Crossroads Theatre, New Federal Theatre and the Negro Ensemble Company (Charles Fuller's Pulitzer-Prize winning *A Soldier's Play* and the Civil War series, *We*). Her costumes for Alvin Ailey Dance Theatre include *Nubian Lady*, *Inside* and *I See the Moon*.

KEN BILLINGTON (*Lighting Design*)

New York City, New York

Highlights: 7 Tony Award nominations; 1997 Tony and Drama Desk Awards for *Chicago*; 80 Broadway shows including the original *Sweeney Todd*. Current touring productions: *High School Musical*, *Annie*, *The Drowsy Chaperone*; supervises lighting for the North American productions of *Riverdance*; Spectaculars include The Radio City Music Hall Christmas show for 27 seasons, *Fantasmic!* at Disneyland, *Shamu Rocks* at Seaworld Orlando and San Diego; 65 operas, world-wide at La Scala, Paris Opera, Colon Madrid, NY City Opera, Houston Grand. Mr. Billington made his Dallas Opera debut with *Le Coq D'or* 26 years ago and returned to design lighting for *Un ballo in maschera* (1978) *The Pearl Fishers* (1979) *Ernani* (1981) *Lucia* (1982) *La fanciulla del West* (1986) *Orpheus in the Underworld* (1986), *Faust* (1991, 1998) and our 1996 *Porgy & Bess*.

DAVID ZIMMERMAN (*Wig & Makeup Design*)

Dallas, Texas

Highlights: Six years on staff, Metropolitan Opera Association. The Dallas Opera (most recently *Lohengrin*, *Salome*, *The Merry Widow*, *Mary Queen of Scots*, *La Rondine*, *Nabucco* and *The Barber of Seville*); Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Santa Fe Opera, Philadelphia Opera, Minnesota Opera and Augusta Opera. Broadway shows including *Jane Eyre*, *Wicked*, *Rocky Horror*, *Evita*, *Titanic*, *Jekyll and Hyde* and *Showboat*. Clients include Deborah Voigt, Jane Eaglen, Sondra Radvanovsky, Martha Stewart and Olympia Dukakis. Television credits include 2003 *Glamour Magazine's Women of the Year* show and Mr. Zimmerman also worked on a new movie, starring Anna Paquin, and hair and makeup for the October 2006 *Opera News* cover and story (the Diva Issue).

After *Porgy and Bess*: *Tosca* for The Dallas Opera.

ALEXANDER ROM (*Chorus Master*)

Kharkov, Ukraine

Highlights: *Salome* (2008), *Lohengrin*, *The Merry Widow*, *Macbeth*, *La Rondine* and *Mary Queen of Scots* (2007), *Nabucco*, *The Barber of Seville* and *The Magic Flute* (2006), *The Tales of Hoffmann* (2005), *Cav/Pag* (2005), *Madame Butterfly* (1995, 2000, 2005), *Jenifa* (1993, 2004) *Der fliegende Holländer* (1993) and other productions – too numerous to name – for The Dallas Opera. A composer (and confirmed book lover) as well as an internationally renowned chorus master, Alexander's works have been performed at Carnegie Hall. His arrangements of songs by Edvard Grieg have been performed at New York's famed South Street Seaport and, in England, by members of the BBC Chorus under the direction of Bo Holten.

After *Porgy and Bess*: *Tosca* for The Dallas Opera.

GORDON HAWKINS (*Porgy*)

Baritone – Clinton, Maryland

Highlights: Miller in *Luisa Miller* (The Dallas Opera); Tonio in *Pagliacci* (Atlanta, Seattle); title role in *Rigoletto* (Dallas, Charlotte); Porgy (Washington Opera, Detroit); Amonasro in *Aida* (Cincinnati, Palm

Beach Opera); Porgy, Alberich in *Das Rheingold* (Washington Opera); title role in *Macbeth* and Donner/Gunther in the *Ring Cycle* (Seattle Opera); the Four Villains in *Les contes d'Hoffmann* (Tokyo); title role of *Rigoletto*, Scarpia, Enrico in *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Deutsche Oper am Rhein); Marcello in *La bohème* (Arizona Opera); Tonio/Alfio in Manitoba Opera's double bill of *Pagliacci/Cavalleria rusticana*; Count Almaviva (Theatro Municipal de Sao Paulo); world premiere of Heggie's *A Great Hope Fell* (EOS Orchestra, NY); and the European premiere, *Of Mice and Men*, at Austria's Bregenz Festival. His performance in *Of Mice and Men* at Houston Grand Opera has been released in an acclaimed commercial recording.

After *Porgy & Bess*: title role in *Rigoletto* (Washington Opera, Arizona Opera); Scarpia in *Tosca* (Cleveland Opera); Alberich in complete *Ring Cycles* (Washington, LA Opera).

INDIRA MAHAJAN (*Bess*)

Soprano – New York City, New York

Highlights: Maria Callas Debut Artist of the Year Award for Musetta in *La bohème*, school performances of *Don Giovanni* (The Dallas Opera); Mimi in Francesca Zambello production of *La bohème* at London's Royal Albert Hall; Bess in *Porgy and Bess* (Washington Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Die Staatsoper Hannover, Teatro Tripovich in Trieste, Italy, with the New York Harlem Theater); Musetta (New York City Opera, Orlando Opera, Houston's Opera Ebony);

Cio-Cio-San in *Madama Butterfly* (Arizona Opera, Dayton Opera); Violetta in *La Traviata* (Bridgeport Symphony, Ash Lawn Festival); Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro* (Virginia Opera, Opera Carolina); Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* (Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Virginia Opera); Gilda in *Rigoletto* (Fort Worth Opera); Lucia in *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Chautauqua Opera); The Richard Tucker gala at Lincoln Center; Moppet in *Paul Bunyan* (Glimmerglass Opera, New York City Opera telecast "Live From Lincoln Center").

After *Porgy & Bess*: Bess in *Porgy and Bess* at the Paris Opera-Comique, Theatre de Caen, France, Grand Theater of Luxembourg, Granada Festival, Spain)

LESTER LYNCH (*Crown*)

Baritone – Elyria, Ohio

Highlights: Crown (Dallas Opera Debut (1997), L.A. Opera, San Francisco Opera, Opera Company of Philadelphia, New York Philharmonic, the Ravinia Festival Orchestra, Washington National Opera, Nashville Symphony recording); Marcello in *La bohème* (New York City Opera); Germont (Houston Grand Opera); Count di Luna (Deutsche Opera am Rhein, Seattle Opera); Flint in *Billy Budd* (Canadian Opera Company); Tonio in *Pagliacci* (Pittsburgh, Lake George Opera); Mendelssohn's *Die Erste Walpurgis Nacht* (Grant Park Music Festival); Bach *Magnificat* (Orchestra of St. Luke's at Carnegie Hall); world premiere of Adolphus Hailstork's *Whitman's Journey* (Washington Master Chorale at the Kennedy Center); *Carmina Burana* (Cincinnati Symphony); Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* (Virginia Symphony).

After *Porgy & Bess*: *Samson et Dalilah* with Denyce Graves (Kentucky Symphony); Di Luna in *Il trovatore* (Nashville); Sharpless in *Butterfly* (Opera Theatre of St. Louis).

ANGELA RENEE SIMPSON* (*Serena*)

Soprano – Brooklyn, New York

Highlights: Serena in *Porgy & Bess* (New York City Opera broadcast "Live from Lincoln Center," Los Angeles Opera, Michigan Opera Theater and Dallas Opera debut); Cilla in *Margaret Garner* (Opera Carolina); Queenie in *Showboat* (Royal Albert Hall, London); Coleman's *The Painted Lady* and Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* (Hartford Symphony); concert appearances with Minnesota Orchestra, the Colorado Springs Symphony, Weill Recital Hall, the Novaya Opera Theater (Russia), Carnegie Hall, the Charleston Symphony, the Bravo Music Festival and other prestigious venues.

After *Porgy & Bess*: Serena in Paris and Caen, France, as well as in Luxembourg.

VICTOR RYAN ROBERTSON* (*Sportin' Life*)

Tenor – Boston, Massachusetts

Highlights: Sportin' Life (Los Angeles Opera); Count Almaviva in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (Michigan Opera Theatre, PORT Opera Festival); Rodolfo in *La bohème* (Royal Albert Hall) and the same role in Baz Luhrman's adaptation of *La bohème* at the Ahmanson Theatre in Los Angeles; Tybalt in *Roméo et Juliette* (Spoleto Festival USA, Atlanta Opera); Richard Tucker Foundation and Cleveland Opera's "Night of the

rising Stars” concert; *3 Mo’ Tenors* (off-Broadway) and the title role of *Les contes d’Hoffmann* (The Dallas Opera school performances).

After *Porgy & Bess*: Prunier in *La Rondine* (Michigan Opera Theatre); Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* (Opera Carolina); Ramiro in *La Cenerentola* (Spoleto Festival USA); Sportin’ Life (Deutsche Oper Berlin) and Count Almaviva in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (Opera Carolina).

JANICE CHANDLER-ETEME* (*Clara*)

Soprano – Washington, D.C.

Highlights: Strauss’ *Four Last Songs* (Baltimore Symphony, Florida Orchestra); Mahler’s *Second Symphony* (Cleveland Orchestra, Nashville (PBS telecast), San Diego, Pacific Symphonies); Donna Elvira (National Philharmonic); Brahms’ *Requiem* and Tippett’s *A Child of Our Time* (Dallas Symphony Orchestra); Villa-Lobos’ *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5* (Orchestre National de la Pays de la Loire); Beethoven’s *Symphony No. 9* (New Jersey and Houston Symphonies); *Porgy & Bess* (Choral Arts Society of Washington, Kennedy Center).

After *Porgy & Bess*: Brahms’ *Requiem* (Orchestra of St. Luke’s Carnegie Hall); Hailstork’s *Done Made My Vow* (Kennedy Center, Washington DC); Beethoven’s *Symphony No. 9* (Detroit Symphony); Mozart’s *Requiem* (Atlanta Symphony), Mahler’s *Symphony No. 2* (Colorado Symphony).

LEON WILLIAMS* (*Jake*)

Baritone – New York City, N.Y.

Highlights: Anthony in *Sweeney Todd* (Toledo Opera); Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte* (Hawaii Opera Theatre); Porgy in *Porgy & Bess* (St. Petersburg, Russia); Brahms’ *Vier ernste Gesänge* (Da Camera Society of Houston); all-American programs at Japan’s Tochigi Music Festival and Maine’s Arcady Music Festival; Sportin’ Life in *Porgy & Bess* (Duluth-Superior Symphony); *Elijah* (Honolulu Symphony); *Carmina Burana* (Florida Orchestra, Westchester, Grand Rapids, Hartford and Colorado Symphonies); “Art of the Spiritual” program at San Francisco’s Herbst Theater and Faure’s *Requiem* (Kansas City Symphony); Poulenc program with Michel Sénéchal and Dalton Baldwin at the 92nd Street Y in NYC. After *Porgy & Bess*: *St. Matthew Passion* with the National Philharmonic.

* Dallas Opera debut

The Dallas Opera’s PORGY AND BESS is generously supported by
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**Ticket Information for the 2007-2008 Dallas Opera Season**  
**Presented by the Elsa von Seggern Foundation**  
**Special Gratitude extended to Margot and the late Bill Winspear**

**Three-Production Subscriptions to The Dallas Opera’s 2007-08 Season are currently on sale, starting at under \$75. Single tickets are priced at \$15 to \$199, if purchased in advance. For more information or to order your tickets, contact The Dallas Opera Ticket Services Office at 214-443-1000 or visit TDO’s website at [dallasopera.org](http://dallasopera.org).**

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The Dallas Opera is supported, in part, by funds from: **City of Dallas, Office of Cultural Affairs; TACA;** and the **Texas Commission on the Arts** and **American Express**. The Dallas Opera would like to thank its 2007-2008 production underwriters, including: **Kimberly-Clark Corporation, Nokia** and **Margot and the late Bill Winspear**. **American Airlines** is the official airline of The Dallas Opera. Pianos provided by **Steinway Hall, Dallas/Ft. Worth/Plano**. Advertising support from *The Dallas Morning News*.

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