



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Amy Demuth, RAD Strategies Inc.  
[media@radstrategiesinc.com](mailto:media@radstrategiesinc.com) / 775-323-6333

## REDISCOVERING GERSHWIN AS IT WAS HEARD NEARLY 76 YEARS AGO PERFORMED TODAY BY THE RENO PHIL

*Reno Phil Classix Four Performances Feb. 21 and 23, 2016*

**RENO, Nev. (Jan. 29, 2016)**—Sweeping romantic tones, powerful piano interjections and the sounds of jazz capture the storytelling as the **Reno Phil** performs two of Gershwin’s timeless classics, with original saxophone parts restored for the first time since the 1940s. Reno Phil’s Classix Four, **Rediscovering Gershwin** takes place **Sunday, Feb. 21** and **Tuesday, Feb. 23** at the Pioneer Center for Performing Arts in Reno, Nevada, highlighting a new critical edition of *An American in Paris* and *Rhapsody in Blue*. Also on the program are William Bolcom’s *Concerto Grosso for Saxophone Quartet and Orchestra* and Leonard Bernstein’s *West Side Story: Symphonic Dances*.

“We are thrilled to feature our principal pianist, James Winn, in Gershwin’s *Rhapsody in Blue* and the Donald Sinta Saxophone Quartet performing throughout the concert for our Classix Four performances,” Laura Jackson, music director and conductor, said. “The new critical editions of Gershwin’s works add an exciting new twist to these familiar and beloved pieces, simply by bringing us back into Gershwin’s sound world. The saxophone typically isn’t part of the orchestra at all, yet this concert will feature four saxophone players. Between them, they will play a total of nine different instruments, sometimes in highly unusual combinations, for example, three soprano saxophones playing at the same time. We are enormously excited to share this very special concert experience with our audiences.”

Saxophones range in size from the low bass to the highest soprano. To perform the Gershwin pieces as originally intended it takes nine saxophones. More often today, these two pieces are performed without the saxophones. However, due to the tremendous contributions of the **University of Michigan Gershwin Initiative**, a project of the American Music Institute in partnership with the families of George and Ira Gershwin, the original essence of these pieces is captured. Reno Phil’s Jackson is a member of the Advisory Board of the Gershwin Critical Edition

Project and has contributed substantively to the editing process. The project was first announced in fall 2013 and led to the donation of George Gershwin’s 1933 Steinway piano to the University. The goal of the new critical edition is to create new scores of all the music of George and Ira Gershwin, giving these masterpieces of American music the depth and quality of a complete scholarly edition. The new editions create the first-ever performance materials to accurately reflect the musical vision of the Gershwin brothers.

-more-

## PAGE 2 – CLASSIX FOUR GERSHWIN

***An American in Paris*** is a poem of homesickness and revelry and is autobiographical, expressing Gershwin's love of Paris and New York. *An American in Paris* was commissioned by conductor Walter Damrosch and premiered by the New York Philharmonic on December 13, 1928 in Carnegie Hall. This new edition features the original wind parts in which three players perform on eight different combinations of soprano, alto, tenor and baritone saxophones to provide a vibrant sound and articulation.

**Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue"** premiered in February of 1924 by Paul Whiteman and his jazz band for his "An Experiment in Modern Music" concert. Although we most often hear a full orchestral version of this work performed today, the Reno Phil will perform a restoration of the original version for Whiteman's band, which included a tiny string section including only 8 violins and 1 double bass.

**Bolcom's Concerto Grosso for Saxophone Quartet and Orchestra** follows the path blazed by George Gershwin and Leonard Bernstein by making both jazz and classical styles part of their compositional voice. The award-winning Donald Sinta Saxophone Quartet, named after one of the most legendary performers of the instrument, is the featured guest for this riveting performance.

The performance concludes with **Bernstein's "West Side Story: Symphonic Dances,"** the orchestral suite. The piece includes orchestral versions of the famous songs "Maria," "America," "Somewhere," "Tonight," and the musical Shakespearean classic, Romeo and Juliet, updated to 1950s New York.

The Reno Phil performance with the new editions is made possible through the partnership with the **University of Michigan Gershwin Initiative.**

The Classix Four performances are Sunday, Feb. 21 at 4 p.m. and Tuesday, Feb. 23 at 7:30 p.m. at the Pioneer Center for the Performing Arts. Pre-concert talks take place Feb. 21 at 3 p.m. and Feb. 23 at 7 p.m. The preview provides attendees a background and historical context to the music to be performed.

Tickets are available online at [RENOPHIL.COM](http://RENOPHIL.COM) or by calling 775-323-6393.

### ***About the Reno Phil***

The [Reno Phil](http://RENOPHIL.COM) is northern Nevada's largest performing arts organization. In its 47<sup>th</sup> season, the orchestra, led by music director Laura Jackson, is comprised of more than 80 professional musicians who perform more than 30 concerts annually throughout the Reno-Tahoe region. Musicians of the professional orchestra, youth orchestras, various ensembles and education programs offer more than 60 performances each year, playing to more than 50,000 people. The flagship of the Reno Phil is its concert series offering six classic music series, *Classix*, performed on Sunday afternoons and Tuesday evenings at the Pioneer Center for the Performing Arts. To learn more about the Reno Philharmonic and its events, and to discover all that the Reno Phil has to offer, visit [RENOPHIL.COM](http://RENOPHIL.COM).

###