

SIRI VIK



## SONGBOOK STANDARDS

*Oregon Festival of American Music celebrates the show tunes of the mid-20th century*

**T**hese days, we take pop songs and turn them into musicals: *Mamma Mia!*, *Jersey Boys*, *Beautiful*, etc.

It used to be the other way around, back in the day. Songs started in musicals, usually those on Broadway and later Hollywood, and then were recorded by pop and jazz stars (maybe *Hamilton* will revive that). This summer's annual **Oregon Festival of American Music** is dedicated to those timeless hits from the 1920s-50s in 14 concerts, films, talks and the staged musical *Good News!*, which continues through this weekend [See Bob Keefer's review in this issue].

Performed at The Shedd by a mix of national talents (Byron Stripling, Ian Whitcomb, Howard Alden, et al) and local music aces (director **Jesse Cloninger**, **Tony Glausi**, **Shirley Andress**, **Vicki Brabham**, **Evyne Hollens**, **Siri Vik** and many others), the concerts begin with next Wednesday's opening sampler featuring classic tunes by the Gershwins, Cole Porter, Irving Berlin, Hoagy Carmichael, Jerome Kern, Rodgers & Hart, Harold Arlen, Duke Ellington and more.

Some of the original stage and screen vehicles remain familiar — *Pal Joey*, *Kiss Me*, *Kate*, *Pennies from Heaven* — but for anyone under, say, 70, individual songs even more so: "Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered," "Someone To Watch Over Me," "How Deep Is The Ocean?" and a dozen more. In fact, part of the fun is realizing just where that Sinatra or Miles Davis hit came from.

The next night, Aug. 3, the "If I Were a Bell" concert showcases the music of Frank Loesser (*Guys And Dolls*, the film version of which will be screened free at The Shedd that morning, *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* and many other musicals) and Cy Coleman (*Sweet Charity* and more). Singer Siri Vik fronts a crack jazz sextet on songs like "The Best Is Yet to Come," "Big Spender" and "If I Were a Bell."

Friday morning kicks off with Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers' Gershwin-graced film classic *Shall We Dance*. In the matinee concert, Cloninger and the **Emerald City Jazz Kings** play unforgettable hits from mostly forgotten musicals (or no musicals at all, but rather revues or jazz records), including "My Blue Heaven," "Skylark," "On the Sunny Side of the Street," "I Can't Give You Anything But Love," "Mood Indigo" and more.

The evening concert celebrates one of the 20th century's great-

est lyricists, Ira Gershwin, who kept writing hits ("The Man That Got Away") even after his brother George's tragically young death ended their string of collaborative classics, including "Nice Work if You Can Get It," "They Can't Take That Away from Me," "Love is Here to Stay," "Someone to Watch Over Me" and more, sung by a vocal quartet featuring Shirley Andress, backed by a big horn-fueled band.

Saturday morning's movie is a rarer Astaire-Rogers gem, *Roberta*, featuring a stellar score by Jerome Kern. Vik returns Saturday afternoon to lead a jazz septet in poignant songs by the unmatched team of Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart, not just standards like "My Funny Valentine," "The Lady Is a Tramp" and "Blue Moon," but also rarer gems. Cloninger, Andress and a small combo return Saturday night to perform music by one of the earliest superstars of the American musical, Jerome Kern (*Showboat*), including numbers like "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes," "All the Things You Are," "The Way You Look Tonight" and a dozen more, some seldom encountered these days.

The annual afternoon jazz party takes place Sunday, Aug. 6, and includes both reserved and cabaret seating, a full bar and Cloninger leading a nonet in jazz versions of songbook standards. After a day of recuperation, action resumes at Tuesday morning's screening of *Easter Parade*, the 1948 Judy Garland/Fred Astaire film that spawned hits like "Steppin' Out with My Baby," penned by Irving Berlin, whose music ("Cheek to Cheek," "Blue Skies," "Alexander's Ragtime Band") is on the bill at that night's "Heat Wave" concert.

Wednesday's film, *Night and Day*, covers the life and music of Cole Porter. You can hear many of his famous tunes ("I Get a Kick Out of You," "Just One of Those Things," "Let's Do It," "Love for Sale," "Anything Goes," "Night and Day" and so many more) that night when Cloninger leads Vik, Bill Hulings and other singers plus a jazz quintet.

Before all that old music arrives, check out the new original music at the July 29 Broadway House concert at the bungalow at 911 W. Broadway, featuring young jazz lions like trumpeter **Josh Deutsch**, joined by a former UO colleague-turned-New Yorker, saxophonist **Hashem Assadullahi**, plus keyboardist **Torrey Newhart** and other excellent young jazz artists. ■

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