

April 3, 2027

7:30 pm

"Salute to the Big Bands"

Dominique and Dustin Luecke – co-hosts

With members of La Crosse Area Youth Symphony Orchestras

- **Gershwin, arr. Chase:** *Fascinatin' Rhythm*
- **Vernon Duke, arr. Sayre:** *April in Paris*
- **Ellington, arr. Ployhar:** *Caravan*
- **Ellington, arr. Custer:** *Ellington!*
- **Various, arr. Deane Kincaide:** *Big Band Fantasy*

INTERMISSION

- **Chris Brubeck:** *Can(n)ons of Freedom*
- **Porter, arr. Warrington:** *On Stage with Cole Porter*
- **Rodgers, arr. Bennett:** *Music from "Flower Drum Song"*
- **Carmichael, arr. Hermann:** *Stardust*
- **Various, arr. Custer:** *Salute to the Big Bands*

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Gershwin, arr. Chase: *Fascinatin' Rhythm*

"**Fascinatin' Rhythm**" is a popular song written by George Gershwin in 1924 with lyrics by his brother, Ira Gershwin. It was first introduced by Cliff Edwards, Fred Astaire, and Adele Astaire in the Broadway musical *Lady Be Good*. The Astaires also recorded the song on April 19, 1926, in London with George Gershwin on the piano. The 1926 Astaire/Gershwin version and a 1938 version by Hawaiian steel guitarist Sol Ho'opi'i have both been added to the Library of Congress's National Recording Registry of "culturally, historically, or aesthetically important" American sound recordings.

This arrangement is by **Robert Bruce Chase** (1912 – 2001), an American composer and music arranger.

In 1939, Chase also created an arrangement of "I Got Rhythm" (from the Gershwin musical *Girl Crazy*) for a Pops concert played by the Kansas Philharmonic (now the Kansas City Symphony) while he was a member of the violin section. He continued arranging tunes and ultimately joined the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra where he made music arrangements for the symphony. He remained as a member of the orchestra until he was well into his seventies and frequently conducted the orchestra in its performances of his arrangements on its Pops concerts.

Vernon Duke, arr. Sayre: *April in Paris*

"April in Paris" is a classic 1932 jazz standard composed by Vernon Duke with lyrics by E. Y. (Yip) Harburg, famously evoking romance and the charm of spring. The song was written for the Broadway musical *Walk a Little Faster*.

Vernon Duke (1903 –1969) was a Russian-born American composer and songwriter who also wrote under his birth name, **Vladimir Dukelsky**. At the age of eleven, Dukelsky was admitted to the Kiev Conservatory, where he studied composition with Reinhold Glière and musical theory with Boleslav Yavorsky. In 1922 in New York, George Gershwin befriended the young immigrant. Gershwin (born Jacob Gershwine) suggested that Dukelsky truncate and Americanize his surname, taking Vernon as his given name. Dukelsky's first songs published under his pen name were conceived that year, but he continued to write classical music and Russian poetry under his birth name until 1955.

In 1924, Dukelsky returned to Europe. In Paris, he received a commission from Serge Diaghilev to compose a ballet for the 1925 season of Ballets Russes, with choreography by Léonide Massine and scenography by Georges Braque, to great critical acclaim. In the late 1920s, Dukelsky divided his time between Paris, where his more classical works were performed, and London, where he composed numbers for musical comedies under his pen name Vernon Duke. The support and devotion of Serge Koussevitzky (former conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra), who published Dukelsky's chamber music and conducted his orchestral scores, helped him develop his classical works. Duke died in 1969. His numerous papers—musical and literary manuscripts and correspondence in English, French, and Russian—are stored in the Musical Division of the Library of Congress.

Charles “Chuck” Sayre is an American composer and arranger. He began his career as a trombonist and arranger for the official jazz ensemble of the United States Air Force. He is known for his full orchestra arrangement of “April in Paris.”

Ellington, arr. Ployhar: *Caravan*

Duke Ellington (1899 – 1974), an American composer, pianist, and conductor, had organized a small jazz band by the time he was 19. He had a 12-piece band at the Cotton Club in New York, and the world of jazz has never been quite the same! “Caravan” is an American jazz standard that was composed by Juan Tizol (a member of the Duke Ellington orchestra for many years) along with Ellington - and first performed by Ellington in 1936. Irving Mills wrote lyrics, but they are rarely sung. The exotic sound of “Caravan” interested exotic musicians.

This version is arranged by **James D. Ployhar** (1926-2007), an American composer, music educator, and film producer.

Ellington, arr. Custer: *Ellington!*

Duke Ellington! (A Medley for Orchestra) arranged by Calvin Custer (1939–1998), is a popular medley featuring four iconic tunes: "Don't Get Around Much Anymore," "Do Nothin' Till You Hear from Me," "Sophisticated Lady," and "It Don't Mean a Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)." Calvin H. Custer (1939 - 1998) was an American composer and arranger. He was prolific in his creations of arrangements for orchestra, many of which were performed by orchestras across the country including the Boston Pops Orchestra.

Various Composers, arr. Deane Kincaide: *Big Band Fantasy*

Robert Deane Kincaide, born in 1911, learned a number of instruments during his youth, including piano and trombone, before concentrating on the tenor saxophone. In 1932 he joined the band of

trumpeter Wingy Manone in Shreveport, Louisiana. Later he became a member of the Woody Herman band. Kincaide was also with the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra, and he briefly, thereafter, worked with Glenn Miller.

As an arranger Kincaide is best-known for his neo-Dixieland versions of “Royal Garden Blues” (1936, on which he is a featured tenor soloist), “South Rampart Street Parade” (1937, co-arranged with Bob Haggart), and “Milenberg Joys” (1939). Other well-known arrangements include “Hawaiian War Chant” (1938) and “Boogie Woogie” (1938), the latter a huge hit for Tommy Dorsey. In the later part of his life Kincaide was active as an arranger for television as well as an arranger for the Glenn Miller Orchestra.

INTERMISSION

Chris Brubeck: *Can(n)ons of Freedom*

Grammy-nominated composer Chris Brubeck continues to distinguish himself as an innovative performer and composer who is clearly tuned into the pulse of contemporary music. Respected music critic for *The Chicago Tribune*, John von Rhein called Chris: “a composer with a real flair for lyrical melody—a 21st Century Lenny Bernstein.”

<https://chrisbrubeck.com/about>

In 1775 a group of courageous colonists decided that they would risk everything to live free and not yield to the dictatorial control and disruptive whims of a king!

This is the original spirit of resistance that led to the Revolutionary War, our Declaration of Independence, Constitution, Bill of Rights and an unending quest for a truly democratic republic. But these grand ideals had to be backed up by bold action.

Charles Peltz, the Music Director of the Glens Falls Symphony, has collaborated with me on other patriotic orchestral works and asked me to compose a new work to celebrate an incredible chapter in our military history that surprised the world in the early days of The American War of Independence.

George Washington’s all-volunteer army was vastly outnumbered and outgunned by England’s professional military’s occupation of Boston. However, Washington’s generals came up with an ingenious plan; capture the lightly defended Fort Ticonderoga and “repurpose” the 59 cannons, mortars and ammunition. Bolder yet, construct large sleds, powered by teams of oxen and horses to haul the tons of cannons across a frozen Lake George, then pull the heavy artillery over the icy, hard ground, sliding over the cushioning snow left by “providential” blizzards across New York State and Massachusetts.

The ragtag caravan struggled all the way to the hills above Boston where the British were stationed as the occupying force. This entire military operation was conducted in secret and only when the British Army woke up to see the stolen cannons from Ticonderoga pointing down on them from

Dorchester Heights in March of 1776 did the Redcoats realize they were outwitted, outmaneuvered and forced to retreat from Boston Harbor with over 9,000 troops.

In modern parlance the British Army and Navy were caught with their pants down and with great humiliation had to sail out of Boston. The British Empire was humbled, and King George III was apoplectic about the audacity of George Washington and our all-volunteer army. He would have his revenge!

To paint this revolutionary story with music, I employ timpani with glissando pedals, bass drum, military snare and field drum rhythms, layered with low brass and strings to evoke the cannon-hauling over the frozen New England 300-mile route. Some melodic ideas are inspired by authentic fife and drum corps tunes played during the Revolutionary War.

In music, a canon is a repeating musical theme that folds back in on itself very much like a round. So, there are two kinds of Can(n)ons represented with this new work. The sounds and compositional techniques work together to salute those patriotic warriors, in most cases just a generation beyond immigrating from Europe in order to find freedom and opportunity in the American Colonies.

As our country was looking forward to its 250th birthday in 2026, it is still important to look to the past and honor the history of our founding fathers, clever and educated patriots, who fought alongside brave farmers and tradesmen who made the highest sacrifices. They left their families behind to serve the high ideals of a nation based on laws and guaranteed freedoms. Collectively, our American ancestors worked together and pushed our newborn democracy into a revolutionary reality. Their stunning story is the musical inspiration for “Can(n)ons of Freedom.”

Chris Brubeck- Danbury CT / December 2025

Porter, arr. Warrington: *On Stage with Cole Porter*

Cole Albert Porter (1891 – 1964) was an American composer and songwriter. Many of his songs became standards noted for their witty, urbane lyrics, and many of his scores found success on Broadway and in Hollywood films. Born to a wealthy family in Indiana, Porter defied his grandfather's wishes for him to practice law and took up music as a profession. Classically trained, he was drawn to musical theater. After a slow start, he began to achieve success in the 1920s, and by the 1930s he was one of the major songwriters for the Broadway musical stage.

Johnny Warrington (1911–1978) was a prolific American arranger, conductor, and bandleader known for his work in the big band era, particularly during the 1940s and 1950s. Based in the Philadelphia area, he arranged numerous popular songs for big bands. He was known for creating "hard-hitting" big band charts and flexible combo arrangements for varied instrumentation.

Warrington began the study of piano and saxophone at age six. He received a degree in civil engineering from Duke University, where he also studied harmony, theory, and counterpoint. Warrington's wide music experience included work as an arranger, as music director of radio

station WCAU in Philadelphia, as a conductor for the American Broadcasting Company radio network in New York City, and as arranger for several publishers.

The bands for which he arranged include those of Tommy Dorsey, Lionel Hampton, Les Elgart, Lawrence Welk, and Henry Mancini. This is his arrangement of *On Stage with Cole Porter* which is a medley of Cole Porter tunes: "It's All Right With Me," "True Love," and "From This Moment On".

Rodgers, arr. Bennett: *Music from "Flower Drum Song"*

Flower Drum Song was the eighth musical by the team of Rodgers and Hammerstein. It is based on the 1957 novel *The Flower Drum Song*, by Chinese-American author C. Y. Lee. It premiered on Broadway in 1958 and was then performed in the West End and on tour. It was adapted for a 1961 musical film.

This arrangement is by **Robert Russell Bennett** (1894 – 1981), an American composer and arranger best known for his orchestration of many well-known Broadway and Hollywood musicals by other composers such as Irving Berlin, George Gershwin, Jerome Kern, Cole Porter, and Richard Rodgers. He was the premier orchestrator for Rodgers and Hammerstein, known for creating lush symphonic suites from their musicals for concert performance.

In 1957 and 2008, Bennett received special Tony Awards recognizing his orchestrations for Broadway shows.

An interesting fact: Sergei Rachmaninoff was writing a two-piano reduction of his *Piano Concerto No. 4*, containing his final revisions, right before he died. Bennett (the arranger for *Flower Drum Song*) completed the 2-piano reduction of Rachmaninoff's *Piano Concerto No. 2* at the request of Rachmaninoff's widow.

Carmichael, arr. Hermann: *Stardust*

This is a song and lyrics by Hoagy Carmichael, Mitchell Parish and Glenn Miller. Hoagland Howard Carmichael (1899 – 1981) was an American musician, composer, and songwriter. He was one of the most successful Tin Pan Alley songwriters of the 1930s and 1940s and was among the first singer-songwriters in the age of mass media to use new communication technologies such as radio broadcasts, television, and musical records.

Carmichael composed several hundred songs, including 50 that achieved hit record status. He is best known for composing one of the most-recorded American songs of all time: "Stardust" (1927), with lyrics by Mitchell Parish. On October 31, 1927, Carmichael recorded "Stardust," one of his most famous songs, at the Gennett Records studio in Richmond, Indiana, playing the piano solo himself.

This version was arranged by Bernard Herrmann (1911 – 1975). He was an American composer and conductor best known for his work in film scoring. He is widely regarded as one of the greatest film composers of all time.

Various Composers, arr. Custer: *Salute to the Big Bands*

Go back to the heyday of the Big Band era with the music of Glenn Miller, Benny Goodman, and others. Calvin Custer takes you on a musical trip with these musical selections including “Serenade in Blue,” Sing, Sing, Sing,” and more.

Custer was associated with the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra during most of his musical career serving in the keyboard, horn, and string bass sections; holding various conducting positions; and serving as staff arranger. He was a member of both the rock and percussion ensembles in which he played numerous instruments including keyboard and guitar.

Custer was prolific in his creations of arrangements for orchestra, many of which were performed by orchestras across the country including the Boston Pops Orchestra.