Gene Lees Ad Libitum &

Jazzletter

PO Box 240, Ojai CA 93024-0240

February 2007 *Vol. 24 No. 2*

Georges et Maurice, Contd

But why did their talent as composers explode after the migration to America? Aside from the Broadway and movie composers, most of the New York classical composers, Aaron Copland, Leonard Bernstein, David Diamond, Marc Blitzstein, and more, excepting Virgil Thompson, Samuel Barber, and Giancarlo Menotti, also were Jewish, and all, incidentally were trained by Nadia Boulanger and all were gay. Barber and Menotti, who met when they were students at the Curtis Institute, were lifelong partners. Boulanger also taught Ned Rorem, who, like David Diamond, made no secret of his homosexuality. Since she also trained Easley Blackwood Jr., Paul Bowleswant, Elliott Carter, Ingolf Dahl, and Walter Piston (author of four profoundly important and widely-used books on musical technique), her influence on American music is almost incalculable. It is surprising that no one has ever written a book on it.

Not incidentally, one of her students was Robert Russell Bennett: he would orchestrate some of Gershwin's musicals.

When I asked Arthur Schwartz why there was such a predominance of Jews in American music, especially in New York, he stiffened. It was as if I'd given him an electric shock. He never gave me an answer. Yip Harburg said, "It's because Jewish music is inherently dramatic." So is Italian and Russian music, and the Italians and Russians have nothing like the presence in American music that the Jews have.

My friend Leonard Marcus, editor of *High Fidelity* during the years I wrote for the magazine, told me that after the German persecutions, the Jews did not want to be conspicuous for *anything*, which is why they ducked my questions. He said, "We don't want to be seen as a clique." But I had never suggested they were.

The publisher Max Dreyfus was Jewish, and he promoted not only the careers of Jewish songwriters but also those of Vincent Youmans, Cole Porter, and Harry Warren. Harry was Italian, born in Brooklyn, but in that same little focus of years as the Gershwins, Arthur Schwartz (also from Brooklyn) and all those cited by Ernie Harburg.

The best hypothesis I have ever heard to explain the explosion of Jewish talent that made American "popular" music came not from a songwriter or publisher but a naval officer, one of my close friends, a submarine commander at one time aide to Hyman Rickover, and other than Rickover himself, the highest ranking Jewish officer in the U.S. Navy. He said, "I think it's because in Europe we were never allowed to own property and had to cater to the culture around us. This made us into cultural chameleons, and when we got to America, we were able to absorb the cultural colors around us like no other immigrant group. So we wrote very American music." I found his comment provocatively interesting. But it has one flaw. Most of these major talents in America were not just Jews but Russian Jews, the great exception being Jerome Kern, whose roots were German Jewish.

Pollack writes; "True to the melting-pot ideal of which he often spoke, Gershwin assimilated other musics, including those associated with Hispanic, Asian, and African American populations. In 1927, he recalled, in Whitmanesque fashion, 'the chorus of city sounds' of his childhood."

He quotes Gershwin: "Wherever I went I heard a concourse of sounds. Many of them were not audible to my companions, for I was hearing them in memory. Strains from the latest concert, the cracked tones of a hurdy gurdy, the wail of a street singer to the obligato of a broken violin, past or present music, I was hearing them within me.

"Old music and new music, forgotten melodies and the craze of the moment, bits of opera, Russian folk songs, Spanish ballads, chansons, rag-time ditties, combined in a mighty chorus in my inner ear. And through and over it all I heard, faint at first, loud at last, the soul of this great America of ours."

The Pollack book devotes a good deal of space to what is generally considered Gershwin's magnum opus, the opera *Porgy and Bess*. This too encountered condescension toward the "mere" pop song writer daring to undertake a majestic task. But it was and is a masterpiece, maybe *the* American masterpiece of the genre, far above anything by Gian Carlo Menotti or Virgil Thompson or anybody else. And Menotti's *Ahmal and the Night Visitor* has been performed more than

2500 times since it had its premiere on television in 1951. I doubt that *Porgy and Bess* has had even a hundred.

The problem with evaluating it, even now, is that very few people have ever heard it. What, haven't heard *Bess, You Is My Woman Now; I Loves You Porgy, Summertime; It Ain't Necessarily So; There's a Boat that's Leavin' Soon for New York?* But they are excerpts, songs extracted from the overall work to take on separate identities unlike those of any other opera in history, not even excepting *Carmen*. They have that much power. But few persons have heard the score in its entirety, because the work is so seldom performed and there are comparatively few recordings of it. Furthermore, it is hard to know what constitutes a complete recording. Gershwin himself made cuts in it before its premiere, partly to reduce its length — it runs at least three-and-a-half hours — and partly to ease the burden on the singers. Other performances have been cut in various ways; but there are nonetheless a number of fine performances. I heard most of it once on a car radio, and was startled by it. The orchestral material in which the arias are set — and this is Gershwin's own orchestration — give the work a unity of construction that one simply did not suspect. And at reveals Gershwin was cognitive of and skilled in techniques of 20th century "serious" composition, the writing at times seeming to echo his friend Schoenberg.

Indeed, I know only one persons who has ever actually seen *Porgy and Bess* on the stage, and that is my lyricist colleague Alan Bergman. His parents took him as a small boy to see *the original production* in 1935 in New York.

The show had two lyricists: Du Bose Heyward who wrote the original novel and play on which it was based, and Ira Gershwin. The lyrics are at the highest level.

For all the popularity of the songs that have been extrapolated from it, *Porgy* has been controversial since its original 1935 production. Some of the cast thought it was demeaning to the Negro. I encountered the antagonism it inspires years ago when I asked the late pianist and composer Calvin Jackson, whom I considered a good hang-out friend, to play one of its songs in his next set. He said in a voice like Minneapolis winter, "I don't play any of the music from that score!" But Calvin's antagonism becomes understandable when you know that he wrote the scores for many Hollywood movies, including *Anchors Aweigh*, without being given credit — an experience he shared with Benny Carter. But many black performers have loved that music, including John Lewis, who recorded an album of its material with his Modern Jazz Quartet. Sarah Vaughan loved it, and did a segment of its songs in her concerts. Her friend Leontyne Price, who had sung the role of Bess with her husband William Warfield as Porgy, liked it. Louis Armstrong and Ella Fitzgerald did an LP of its songs.

The underlying assumption in the criticism is that a white musician had no business writing music about the Negro of South Carolina. That is comparable to some of the derogation directed at William Styron for his skin-stripping excoriation of racism in *The Confessions of Nat Turner*. But more, by extension. Did Verdi have no business composing *Aida* because he wasn't Egyptian? Should Bizet have refrained from writing *Carmen* because he wasn't Spanish? Or Puccini from writing *Madama Butterfly* because he was neither Japanese nor American? Should Shakespeare have just passed on all those Italian subjects such as *Romeo and Juliet, Two Gentleman of Verona, The Taming of the Shrew, Othello,* because he wasn't Italian and on *Hamlet* because he wasn't Danish?

Todd Duncan, who created the role of Porgy in the original production, vigorously defended the work, saying that it was, for God's sake, *an opera*, and pointing out how many careers it had launched for black singers. Opera is a convention, like ballet or Japanese kabuki theater, not a naturalistic medium; for in the last analysis the only thing that is truly naturalistic is nature itself.

The movie version is no longer available. The Gershwin family hated it and eventually had it pulled off the market; some bootleg videos still float around. I thought the film was a complete botch, and never want to see it again. Sidney Poitier regretted having taken the role of Porgy (with Robert McFerrin's voice dubbed). And he was right.

But when it came out in 1959, the record industry pushed out albums co-ordinated to it, including a very good one, *The Jazz Soul of Porgy and Bess,* by the late arranger Bill Potts, with an orchestra that included Zoot Sims and Bill Evans.

But the most visible was that done by Miles Davis and Gil Evans, which remains one of the greatest albums in the history of jazz. When it came out, I was talking to Gil, expressing my admiration for the writing, and I said I loved the changes he'd use.

Gil said, "Those aren't my changes. They're Gershwin's. I added nothing."

I mentioned this to Roger Kellaway. He went to the piano and said, "Listen to this." He played the opening of *Liza*, the standard chords used by jazz musicians today. He said, "And then this." He played the same phrase again, and said, "But the fourth chord in E-flat is C-seventh with a G bass. That's Gershwin's chord, and it's gorgeous."

POLLACK'S BOOK is best described as exasperating. It is not linear. Its first section deals with Gershwin's life for about 200 pages. Part Two deals with his work. The life and work

are kept separate. The writing on his music is invaluable; other parts are almost unendurably tedious. One hardly needs lists going on for pages of the casts and choreographers and crew and costume designer and forgotten songs for London productions of the early 1920s.

But when Pollack, a music professor at the University, goes into the influences on Gershwin's music, both popular and classical, the book takes on power and importance. This is some of the best musical analysis you're likely to find anywhere. These passages deserve to be re-read and digested. Unfortunately they are not for the lay reader. Only musicians, and those with a knowledge of theory, will understand them.

The book runs to nearly 900 pages. Its writer lacked the discipline and its anonymous editor lacked the courage to cut it. To check on it, I went back to the 1970 edition of the David Ewen book *George Gershwin: His Journey to Greatness*. It is far more readable, and Ewen had the advantage of direct contact with members of the Gershwin family. And it is pretty good on musical analysis too.

A recent review in the *Los Angeles Times* made the point that "biographical storytelling loses something in the quest for comprehensiveness." But, it says, Gershwin would "certainly have loved the way Pollack bends over backwards to protect him, shoring up his reputation as a first-rate orchestrator in the face of lingering doubts, painting him as a kind of prototypal metrosexual rather than as a bisexual (as has occasionally been whispered) . . . ."

You can hear that murmur about just about anyone in show business, and I have heard it about Gershwin. But I have never heard it from anyone *who knew him*. And I have known a lot of people who knew him, including songwriter Arthur Schwartz, film composers David Raksin and Hugo Friedhofer; Robert Russell Bennett, who worked on some of the musicals with him, Artie Shaw, and more.

He had an affair with Ginger Rogers and another with Paulette Goddard. And in the March 2007 issue of *Vanity Fair*, in an article by Michael Feinstein on Kitty Carlisle Hart, now ninety-six, the self-appointed *grande doyenne* of musical theater is quoted as saying Gershwin was her lover. In researching my biography of Alan Jay Lerner and Fritz Lowe, I found that she gave herself inflated credit for everything. She was a minimally talented singer who never really succeeded in anything, including her film career, and I caught her out in one flagrant lie about Lerner's wife Micheline, whom she intensely disliked.

So take her testimony for what it's worth; she said of Gershwin:

"He was a wonderful person. I was enchanted by George and I loved being with him. He put the moves on me quickly, and I was delighted. I couldn't have been happier. We would go to El Morocco and dance, all dressed up, and I used to go with George to Harlem. He was *persona grata*, and we were treated as honored guests. George asked me to marry him, but he didn't really love me. I think he asked me because he thought it would be suitable. I asked him why he didn't marry his long-time flame, Kay Swift, and he said, 'I'd never marry her because she isn't Jewish.'"

It is elsewhere on record that Gershwin wanted to marry a Jewish girl, probably to please his mother. And Goddard was Jewish. But Kay Swift was something special in his life.

She was preternaturally talented. Born in New York city, daughter of a music critic, she was trained as a pianist and composer at the Institute of Musical Art before it was re-

Kay Swift

named Juilliard and at the New England Conservatory. One of her teachers was Percy Goetschius. For a time she toured as accompanist to classical artists, and might have had her own concert career had she not become a songwriter. After Gershwin died, she wrote out songs she had heard him play and helped Ira resurrect melodies for the film *The Shocking Miss Pilgrim*. Indeed she seems to have been one of those people of amazing musical memory, like Glazounov and Arthur Loesser. She was described by one acquaintance as "vain, childish, witty, delightful — the beautiful flapper who

reliably taught guests how to do the Charleston," and a cousin, actor Trader Faulkner, said, "She seemed to be very superficial, but she was au fond very astute."

In 1918 Katherine Swift — it was Gershwin who named her Kay — married James P. Warburg of a prominent banking family whose members were appalled when he married a gentile. She bore him three daughters. She and Warburg met Gershwin on April 17, 1925, at a reception for Jascha Heifetz at the home of one of her friends. Pollack says "the two soon formed a romantic bond. Although swift already had some appreciation for popular music, Gershwin made a thorough convert of her, and she became an utterly devoted factotum, editing his music, taking down notation, copying parts, and placing her guest house [in Connecticut] at his disposal. Even as she undertook some more serious projects — including, thanks to Gershwin's intervention, a ballet for Balanchine, *Alma Mater* (1934, orchestrated by Morton Gould, also at Gershwin's recommendation) — she began to write popular theater music strongly influenced by Gershwin. Her biggest hits included the song *Can't We Be Friends?* (1929) and the show *Fine and Dandy* (1930, the first complete Broadway score by a woman), works that were written in collaboration with her husband (who wrote the lyrics under the name Paul James) and that provide a good record of the Walburg's style and sophistication.

How they juggled their priorities, one can only surmise, but Warburg and Gershwin were friends. Eventually, however, the strain of the affair, which sounds like something out of a Cole Porter lyric, appears to have got to them. Ten years into her affair with Gershwin, she and Warburg divorced but there was still no movement toward marriage. Gershwin's aunt by marriage on his mother's side, Kate Wolpin, thought that Kay wasn't "attractive enough" for Gershwin, but this sounds like the kvetching of aunt who would disapproved of any shikseh he might bring home. Photos in fact show Kay Swift to have been a pretty nifty number.

Gershwin, by the time he met her, was a darling of the wealthy, the Park Avenue set. She appears, like Gershwin, to have had a number of affairs, and according to the Pollack book, she told pianist Michael Feinstein, Ira Gershwin's long-time amanuensis and protégé, George was "the best lover I ever had," which suggests she was a connoisseur.

One of Gershwin's friends was financial Emil Mosbacher. He said that both Gershwin and Swift talked to him of marriage. He said, "From Gershwin I'd get it every day. He was nuts about her." According to Pollack, Kay Swift thought that had she and Gershwin married, the relationship would have ended in divorce.

Murmurs of homosexuality also attended Ravel. At the same time it was said that he frequented the bordellos of Paris. If so, then he was in the pattern of another diminutive French genius, Toulouse-Lautrec. In its entry on Ravel, Wikipedia says "the issue of his sexuality remains largely a mystery."

I have something to contribute to this discussion, a story I have never told before.

Probably in 1957, when I was classical music critic of the *Louisville Times*, the great cellist Gregor Piatigorsky (1903-1976) came to town to play a recital, and I of course had to interview him. We had lunch. Many major twentieth century composers had written concertos for him, including Prokofiev, Hindemith, and Walton. I knew that Piatigorsky and Ravel had been friends, and given my lifelong reverence for Ravel, naturally I asked about him.

I had read every available biography of Ravel. And in those days, whenever a biography said simply nothing about the sexual life of its subjects, one could almost take it as a given that the person was homosexual. And in writings on Ravel, this part if his life was treated with a resounding silence. So I asked Piatigorsky about it.

He was an enormous man in whose hands a cello (he owned two Strads) almost looked like a viola. And in his thick Russian accent, which I still vividly remember, he said, "I do not go around peeking in bedroom windows." That certainly put me in my place. But Piatigorsky had only contributed to the silence.

Later that year, I won the John Ogden Reid Fellowship, awarded by the *New York Herald Tribune*, and left for a year of free-ranging study in Europe. I lived in Paris through 1958-59. And I was constantly encountering the memory of Ravel, who at that point had been dead a bit over twenty years. I found myself meeting his friends, including Nadia Boulanger and Marguerite Long, the pre-eminent woman pianist of France in the first half of the 20th century.

She had studied with Gabriel Fauré, as had Ravel. Long played the premiere of Ravel's *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, one movement of which is dedicated to her husband, who had been killed in World War I.

Soon after he met Gershwin, Ravel telephoned to tell her, "I'm composing a concerto for you. Do you mind if it ends pianissimo, with trills?" She didn't hear from him for months, and when she did, he said, "I'm bringing the concerto round today." She gave it the first performance in January 1932, with Ravel conducting. And of course it is a magnificent work drenched in the colorations of Gershwin — and jazz.

Toward the end of that year in France, I spent a month writing in a country house near the village of Houdon, lent to me by a French friend. Except for trips to a the village of Gambais to buy groceries, I saw nobody and spoke to nobody.

As the month came to an end, I realized that the village of Montfort-l'Amaury was nearby. And Ravel's house was there! I drove over, only to learn that tours of the house ended at three p.m., and it was now perhaps a half hour after that. But at least I stood on its porch, close on the street. A caretaker detected my presence and opened the front door. I told him of my admiration of Ravel, said that I had to go back to America in a few days, and regretted that I was too late to see the house. I must have seemed sympathetic, for he said he would let me look around on my own. I entered the house with a reverence I can't describe. He asked me not to touch anything, but otherwise left me to my own devices. I looked at the pictures on the walls, and Ravel's collection of delicate *bibelots*. I walked out on the rear porch. The house is built on a slope; the front door is at street level, but it drops off immediately. There is a famous photo of Ravel leaning on the railing of that rear porch. I recognized the view instantly from that picture. It gave me *frissons*, a kind of shudder.

I went downstairs. There was his bedroom, and a bathroom adjacent to it. I'm not certain of this memory, but I think the fixtures were gold. A few months ago I said to the brilliant French pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet, who has recorded the entire Ravel piano repertoire, that I presume he had been to that house. "Many times," he said. I told him of my own visit *insolite*, and he said, "You know, it's closed now. It's a national monument."

I thanked the caretaker for his extraordinary kindness and left. I returned to Paris the next day. I had one or two more appointments before returning to the U.S. One was with the renowned musicologist Marc Pincherle, whom Marguerite Long had recommended that I see; in fact, she arranged my introduction. In 1913, when he was twenty-five, Marc Pincherle submitted his doctoral thesis on Antonio Vivaldi, whose work was at that point forgotten. This became a book called *Vivaldi: Genius of the Baroque*, published in English by W.W. Norton. In effect. He single-handedly restored the name and work of Vivaldi, and did much the same for Corelli and other baroque figures.

But it was his friend Ravel whom I was most interested in. As delicately as possible, I asked him about Ravel's sexual life, keeping in mind the disdain from Piatigorsky the year before. This time I encountered only a frosty silence. And I did a trick familiar to newspaper reporters, trial lawyers, and cops. I deliberately irritated him. I said, "J'ai entendu dire que c'était une tapette." It means, "I heard he was a fag." It is as aggressive in French as in English. And he flared.

He said he was sick of hearing this. He said that when Ravel was in his early twenties he fell in love with a singer in the Paris Opera. He wooed her, and finally she consented to sleep with him. When he undressed, she took one look at him and . . . . Pincherle held his thumb and forefinger about an inch apart and said, "He was not very masculine." I got the point. He said the girl laughed at him. And, he said, "You visited the house at Montfort-l'Amaury. Then you must have noticed where the bathroom is."

"Yes. In the basement."

"Where no one could see him."

So, then, he had no sex life — except to the extent of perfunctory and I would think pathetic contact with hookers, if that testimony is true. There was no love in it. The love is all in the music.

You have no authority for this story except my word that this is what Marc Pincherle told me. And there is no way to verify it.

In early 1937, Gershwin, in California, began to experience severe headaches. The doctors could find nothing wrong with him. He consulted a psychiatrist, then underwent a series of physical tests at Cedars of Lebanon Hospital in Los Angeles. He refused a lumbar puncture, and left the hospital on June 26, telling Oscar Levant that a brain tumor had been ruled out. At home, his coordination deteriorated. Pollack says "he stumbled on stairs, dropped objects, and had trouble using a fork and playing the piano" and had two epileptic seizures.

In 1932, Ravel was in an automobile accident that cost him some teeth and a mild concussion. He was having some trouble playing the piano and speaking. He tried acupuncture and hypnosis, which accomplished nothing. He wrote short sketches but never again completed a composition. He suffered from a progressive aphasia, which first cost him the ability to write music and then even to recognize it. He was taken to a concert at which one of his own works was performed. He said he liked it, but he didn't recognize it. He began to have trouble walking and writing.

On July 9, 1937, Gershwin went into a coma and was returned to Cedars of Lebanon. A neurosurgeon administered a spinal tap and found evidence of a brain tumor. During the early hours of July 11, Gershwin underwent a five-hour surgery during which a tumor was removed from the right temporal lobe. He died at 10:30 a.m. He was thirty-nine.

A little more than five months later, on December 28, 1937, in Paris, his friend Maurice Ravel underwent brain surgery and died on the operating table. The actual cause of his death was not determined, and French law prohibited the publication of family secrets. He was sixty-two. I have always found the parallel circumstances of their deaths haunting and strange, coincidence to be sure, but odd all the same.

Sir Michael Tippett, considered the preeminent British composer of the twentieth century, said, "I have . . . come to

revere Gershwin: in an age of experimentation with rhythm, percussive and fragmented textures, Gershwin kept song alive. I sometimes wonder now what might have happened to that irrepressible creative sprit, had he lived through the Second World War."

IN THE 1960S, at Johnny Mercer's urging, I interviewed Harold Arlen. I found the temerity to ask him: "Mr. Arlen, when you and Gershwin and Kern and Porter and the rest were writing in the 1920s and '30s, were you consciously aware that what you were creating was art music?" Because up to then it had all been relegated to the status of "mere" popular music. I don't know whether his pause was because he thought I was stupid or because nobody had ever asked the question before. At last he said softly: "Yes."

I once had a conversation with Robert Russell Bennett. He had written seven symphonies and at least five concertos, aside from his work as an arranger and orchestrator of shows for Cole Porter, Jerome Kern, and Richard Rodgers: he orchestrated both *Show Boat* and *Oklahoma!* And of course he orchestrated many of Gershwin's shows. He was a profoundly adept musician who wrote complete scores silently in his head and then set them down, not in pencil but in ink. One of the few musicians I've known who did this was Billy Byers, another protégée of Nadia Boulanger. And Bennett would write scores while listening to baseball games on the radio. He was said to like baseball more than music, and he admitted to me that he did.

He was talking of Gershwin as if he were an idiot savant. He said Gershwin could walk down the street and any music he heard could turn up in a Gershwin song. Taken aback I said, "But Mr. Bennett, how is it that you can hear six or eight bars of a tune and know it's Gershwin?"

"Ah," he said, "but that's genius!"

KAY SWIFT REMAINED an active arranger into her seventies, even contributing some choral writing to *Hair*. Her papers, twenty-six boxes of them including correspondence and music manuscripts, are in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library at Yale.

In September of 1973, I was in Boston with my wife to enroll my son at the Berklee College of Music. We were staying in one of the downtown hotels, the Copley Plaza, as I recall. One evening we went down to dinner. There was a bar adjacent to the dining room with open double doors. Someone began playing piano in the bar — and playing very well, indeed dazzlingly well. But the style of the playing was not modern, and it wasn't jazz, and the chords were not of the color or character Oscar Peterson or Bill Evans might use. They had an airy transparent clarity. Fascinated, I went to the double doors leading into the bar to see who was at the piano. It was an elderly woman in a very proper and old-fashioned dress. She even wore a hat in the manner of the early '30s.

When she had finished playing, I introduced myself and asked if she would like to have a drink with my wife and me. She assented graciously, and when we went to our table. I got the impression, and perhaps she said as much, that she didn't actually work there, she just played for her pleasure, with the hotel's accord, when she was of a mood to. My wife recalls that she seemed to have an air of gentle amusement, perhaps because I didn't know who she was. I finally said she must be playing Gershwin's original harmonic progressions. She said that she was. And I asked how she had come by them — published sheet music so often having wrong or at least clumsy chord changes

She said, "George gave them to me." And she said she had a lot of his music in manuscript. Trying not to be importunate, I asked her further about him, since it seemed unlikely that he went around handing out music manuscripts to girls met casually. She gave us the impression that her relationship with him had been much more than platonic and had gone on for years. She was at that time, I have deduced, seventy-seven or -eight years old. She was still attractive, and breathed a certain very feminine sensualism.

We spent perhaps a half hour with her, and then she went back to the piano and we sat there blown away by her playing, the very Gershwin changes Gil Evans said he had used in the Miles Davis *Porgy and Bess* album.

I had largely forgotten the encounter until the Pollack book led me to listen anew to a great deal of Gershwin and reconsider his life. Suddenly I realized who she was — *had* to be. I started to tell my friend Alan Bergman about the encounter, but he cut me off with an outburst: "Kay Swift!"

It could have been no one else. It is possible that she introduced herself by her last married name, which I would not have recognized. Katherine Faulkner Swift married three times in all. Her last known composition is titled *Keep On Keeping On*, dedicated to a granddaughter killed in an automobile accident. The *ASCAP Biographical Dictionary* gives her birth date as April 19, 1905, but she had apparently been fudging, The actual date was April 19, 1897. Photos show her to have been a very sexy and stylish young woman, including one taken with Gershwin in front of a car in California in which they look . . . happy. There is no other word; it is an aura around them.

She died in Southington, Connecticut, on January 28, 1993, having outlived her lover and his friend Maurice Ravel by fifty-six years.