

Oct. 4 and 6

Marin's Season of the Scribe

[Marin Symphony](#)

By [Lisa Petrie](#)

The Marin Symphony's 2009-2010 opening concert starts with the quintessentially American music of George Gershwin. Add to the mix the personal anecdotes of the notable author Tobias Wolff, plus an exciting young pianist, and suddenly a 20th-century American ethos comes to life.

Tobias Wolff

The Symphony, with Music Director Alasdair Neale on the podium, continues this brilliant thematic programming for the third season in a row, drawing parallels between classical music and other artistic disciplines. This season it's the written word — each concert includes a preconcert talk by a notable local writer discussing the influence of the evening's repertoire on his or her own art. As Marin Symphony Board President John R. Pitcairn says, "We're trying to show our audiences that artists of all types live and breathe classical music. So many people have the misperception that classical music is irrelevant today. On the contrary, it forms the bedrock of creative life in all disciplines."

The concert, titled "Playing the Grooves Off Gershwin," highlights one of America's most famous composers, born Jacob Gershowitz to Russian-Jewish parents in Brooklyn in 1898. Early in his career George Gershwin earned a living by making dozens of player-piano-roll recordings of his own tunes and popular songs of the day. He and his brother, lyricist Ira, collaborated on some 15 Broadway musicals. George wrote one opera, *Porgy and Bess*, as well as his orchestral music, before his life was cut short by a brain tumor; he died at age 38. One of his last concerts was with the San Francisco Symphony under Pierre Monteux in the year of his death, 1937.

Apparently Gershwin's composition *An American in Paris* is a favorite of the guest speaker and writer Tobias Wolff. Wolff is most famous for his short stories and memoirs. His books *This Boy's Life* and *In Pharaoh's Army* draw from his own horrible childhood

experiences with a cruel stepfather, detailing how he orchestrated his own "escape" to a Pennsylvania Christine Brewer prep school, and describing his stint with the Green Berets in Viet Nam.

He'll speak with Maestro Neale about his love for Gershwin's music and its impact on his own work at 6:30 p.m. Additional scribes to be presented throughout the season as adjuncts to the performance are Barbara Quick, Roger Housden, Jane Anderson, and Susan Kinsolving (with composer David Carlson).

The opening concert also brings a musical poet to the stage, the dashing young pianist Keisuke Nakagoshi, performing *Rhapsody in Blue*. A native of Japan, Nakagoshi has been in the U.S. since he was 18, when he began studying both composition and piano at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music (SFCM). In 2007, he was selected for a highly coveted professional training workshop with Emanuel Ax, which culminated in performances in Carnegie Hall. Nakagoshi recently toured many American cities as principal pianist for conductor George Daugherty's award-winning show "Bugs Bunny on Broadway," and he is a staff accompanist at SFCM. A pianist with unbelievable chops as well as mature and thoughtful interpretation, Nakagoshi is sure to have an interesting career.

Literati, this Marin Symphony season's for you! And with additional guest soloists, like violinists Elizabeth Pitcairn and Vadim Guzman, conductor Edward Abrahams, and soprano Christine Brewer, there's enough to keep the rest of us happy, too.

Lisa Petrie earned a D.M.A. in flute performance from SUNY, Stony Brook. She has been a communications professional in the arts and education for 10 years, including work in Switzerland and Holland, as well as the Bay Area.

Event Information

Orchestra

[Rhapsody in all-Gershwin!](#)

- **Organization:** [Marin Symphony](#)
- **Venue:** [Marin Center Veterans Memorial Auditorium](#)
- **City:** San Rafael
- **Date:** October 4, 2009 7:30 PM
- **Price Range:** \$29-\$70
- **Tickets:** 415.499.6800

Additional Dates:

[October 6, 2009 7:30 PM](#)

Marin Center Veterans Memorial Auditorium

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October 1, 2009

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