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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:

# Rogue Valley Symphony Launches 2023/24 Season With *Rhapsody in Blue* Celebration

On August 26 and 27, 2023 at the Craterian Theater in Medford, Oregon, the Rogue Valley Symphony (RVS) is excited to perform a special concert in celebration of the centennial of George Gershwin's iconic work for piano soloist and orchestra, *Rhapsody in Blue*. In tandem with the Gershwin classic, pianist Jeffrey Biegel joins RVS for the West Coast premiere of a new work written especially for the centennial celebrations: *Rhapsody in Red, White & Blue* by composer Peter Boyer.

Alongside the two Rhapsodies, RVS will also perform Adolphus Hailstork's *Three Spirituals* and Gershwin's other timeless orchestral work, *An American in Paris*. RVS Music Director Martin Majkut says, "Gershwin's classic premiered back in February 1924, so our celebration of 100 years of *Rhapsody in Blue* is a little early. Either way, we're very excited to get the party started with these two works with Jeffrey and Peter, alongside two works that exemplify Gershwin's brilliant contributions to the musical world."

A tireless champion of new music for piano and orchestra, Jeffrey Biegel has premiered numerous works created for him by many of America's leading classical composers, including William Bolcom, Richard Danielpour, Kenneth Fuchs, Christopher Theofanidis, and many more. Regarding the *Rhapsody* project, Biegel commented, "In addition to my love for the classic repertoire, much of my life has been devoted to cultivating new music for piano and orchestra by American composers. To celebrate the centennial of George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* in 2024, I conceived the idea for the *Rhapsody in Red, White & Blue* project, and chose Peter Boyer, whose music has become widely respected in America and abroad. His musical vocabulary and sensibilities are perfect for this special project."

In recent years, Peter Boyer's profile as a "go to composer" for American subject matter in the classical music world has risen ever higher. His Grammy-nominated work *Ellis Island: The Dream of America*, which RVS performed in 2022, was produced for PBS's eminent Great Performances series with the Pacific Symphony, and has received over 200 performances by 100 different orchestras. Boyer said, "Having long admired Jeffrey Biegel's virtuoso piano technique, beautiful sound, and his indefatigable efforts to bring new American music into the world, I'm delighted that he has invited me to be part of his latest commissioning project, which promises to be a special one. Though of course it's daunting for any American composer to

attempt to compose a work which might stand alongside Gershwin's iconic *Rhapsody in Blue*, Jeffrey's confidence and boundless energy embolden me to give it my best efforts."

Tickets for this special event can be purchased on our website, [www.rvsymphony.org](http://www.rvsymphony.org), or by calling our box office at (541) 708-6400.