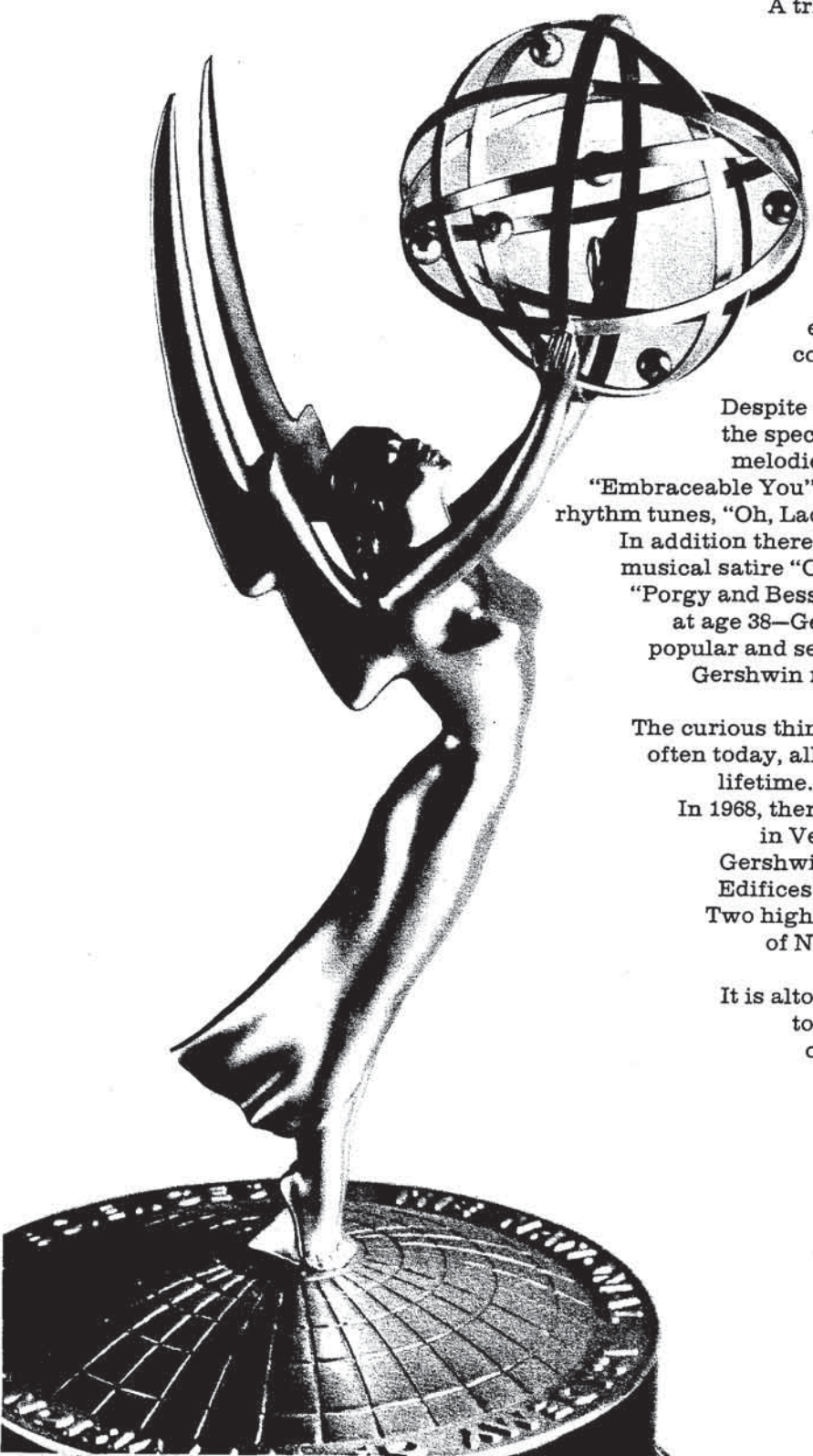


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A tribute to the memorable music and lyrics of George and Ira Gershwin was offered by the Bell System Family Theatre in a unique 90-minute concert format on NBC, January 17, 1972, in the Emmy award winning program called "Jack Lemmon in 'S Wonderful, 'S Marvelous, 'S Gershwin." Also starring were Fred Astaire, Leslie Uggams, Ethel Merman, Peter Nero, Larry Kert, Linda Bennett and Robert Guillaume.

The program was conceived, produced and written by Martin Charnin. He also directed the show with Walter C. Miller. Joseph Cates is executive producer. Elliot Lawrence arranged and conducted the music, and Alan Johnson was choreographer and lead dancer.

Despite the galaxy of performers, the undeniable "star" of the special telecast was the Gershwin music. More than 50 melodies were heard, ranging from such lovely ballads as "Embraceable You" and "Someone To Watch Over Me," to the bouncy, rhythm tunes, "Oh, Lady Be Good" and "Let's Call The Whole Thing Off." In addition there were numerous selections from the Pulitzer Prize musical satire "Of Thee I Sing" and from the memorable folk opera "Porgy and Bess." In his short life—he died in 1937 of a brain tumor at age 38—George Gershwin composed an incredible amount of popular and serious music. One can only speculate on how much Gershwin might have contributed to American music had he lived the normal span of years.

The curious thing about Gershwin's music is that it is played more often today, all over the world, than it was during the composer's lifetime. His popularity in Europe has continued unabated. In 1968, there was a three-night festival of all Gershwin music in Venice. The BBC in England broadcast 90 minutes of Gershwin works to twelve countries on December 29, 1969. Edifices to the Gershwin memory are periodically erected. Two high schools and a college (part of the State University of New York) bear his name. But his greatest and most enduring monument is his music.

It is altogether fitting that most of the unforgettable lyrics to the unforgettable songs were written by George's older brother, Ira, who celebrated his 75th birthday on December 6, 1971.