



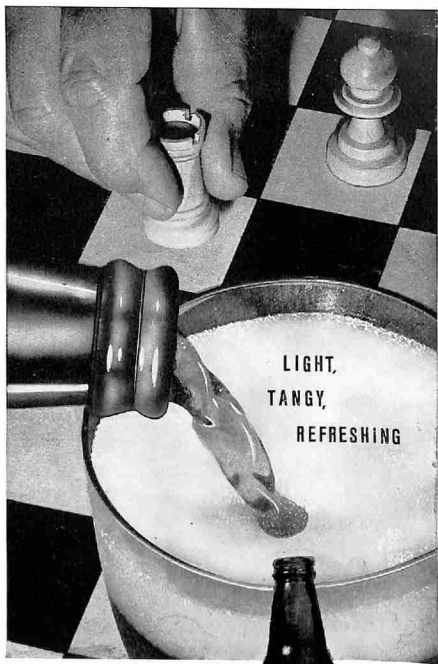
# **PORGY AND BESS**

**NEW ZEALAND OPERA COMPANY**

**March-June 1965**

CHRISTCHURCH, INVERCARGILL, DUNEDIN, PALMERSTON NORTH, WELLINGTON, HASTINGS, NAPIER, NEW PLYMOUTH  
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# Opera

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*General Manager:* Ulric Williams. *Production Director:* Donald Munro. *Secretary-Manager:* Constance Scott

# PORGY AND BESS

*Music by George Gershwin Libretto by DuBose Heyward*

*Lyrics by DuBose Heyward and Ira Gershwin Founded on the play 'Porgy' by DuBose and Dorothy Heyward*



**ELLA GERBER — Director**

Started as a Broadway, television and film actress, became a dramatic coach, playwright, lecturer and producer. She has studied in many places (including Stratford-on-Avon) and, in addition to dozens of Porgy & Besses throughout the States and Europe, has directed Design for a Stained Glass Window, Tiger Rag, Dark of the Moon, Gypsy and many musicals including some in the round. She is the Artistic Director of the Youngstown Playhouse, Ohio.



**DOBBS FRANKS — Musical Director**

Is a Bachelor of Music with honours and did his post graduate study at the Juilliard School of Music, New York City, 1954-56. He has had wide experience throughout the States in opera, symphonic and choral work. In addition to his U.S. tour of Porgy & Bess he has conducted Camelot, South Pacific, West Side Story, Most Happy Fella etc. including the Australian tour of the latter two shows.

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### **INIA TE WIATA — Porgy**

was born in Otaki, was awarded a scholarship to the Trinity College of Music in London, and then entered the Joan Cross Opera School. At the Royal Opera House and at Sadler's Wells he has sung principal roles. He has given recital tours throughout Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, The Far East, South Africa and the U.S.S.R. He has sung 'Tony' in *'Most Happy Fella'* on Broadway and in London and Australia and makes frequent radio and television appearances.

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### **MARTHA FLOWERS — Bess**

has sung this role throughout America and in the Opera Houses of Paris, Berlin, Milan, Moscow, Leningrad, Rio de Janeiro and other major cities in South America, Africa, Europe and Asia. She has been the recipient of many of the most coveted American scholarships and awards and has appeared in opera, solo recitals and concert work throughout Europe and the American continent.



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**JOHN McCURRY — Crown**

has sung this role throughout America and Europe including the production in which William Warfield and Leontyne Price sang the title roles. His stage, television and film experience includes such productions as 'Carmen Jones', 'Androcles and the Lion', 'Finian's Rainbow', 'Of Mice and Men', 'Green Pastures' and 'The Pawnbroker'.

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**DELORES IVORY — Serena**

is a Bachelor of Science in Education but has made her career in music, singing with the Celeste Cole Opera Workshop in which she performed the leading soprano roles in La Traviata, Il Trovatore, The Pearl Fishers, Carmen, Cavalleria Rusticana. She also sings in oratorio and is at present soloist at the St. James Presbyterian Church, New York city.



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**HANNAH TATANA — Maria**

was a place winner in the Sun Aria and Mobil Quest and has sung in solo concert tours, in oratorio and shared the title role in the New Zealand Opera Company's tour of Carmen in 1962.

★



**MARK METEKINGI — Jake**

is a school teacher who is working on a Maori canoe in which he proposes to retrace the voyage of his ancestors across the Pacific. He has appeared on radio, television and in films and has toured with the New Zealand Opera Company's productions of 'Rigoletto', 'The Bartered Bride' and 'La Cenerentola'.



**ISABEL WHATARAU COWAN  
— Clara**

has done cabaret and concert work throughout Australia and New Zealand, including tours with Howard Morrison. She won the Wellington 'Have A Shot' television talent quest.

★



**TONI WILLIAMS**

**— Sportin' Life**

has played the 'pop' circuit throughout New Zealand and Australia and has toured with the Howard Morrison Quartet in both these countries. He performs as a solo cabaret artist in New Zealand, Australia and New Caledonia.

★



**SAM STEVENS — Mingo**

is a school teacher, singer, modern-ballet dancer, plays several instruments (including piano and guitar) and is an actor on stage and screen.

## GAST

(in order of appearance)

Clara *Isabel Cowan*  
 Mingo *Sam Stevens*  
 Sportin' Life *Toni Williams*  
 Jake *Mark Metekingi*  
 Serena *Delores Ivory*  
 Robbins *Peter Keiha*  
 Ruby *Newha Taiaki*  
 Jim *Don Selwyn*  
 Scipio *Api Taylor*  
 Peter, the Honeyman *Bob Hirini*  
 Lily *Celeste Barker*  
 Annie *Diana Winterburn*  
 Maria *Hannah Tatana*  
 Porgy *Inia Te Wiata*  
 Bess *Martha Flowers*  
 Crown *John McCurry*  
 Detective *Eric Wood*  
 Policeman *Bernard Reid*  
 Undertaker *Bill Mataira*  
 Frazier *Tuta Kainamu*  
 Strawberry woman *Peti Rei*  
 Crabman *Edward Huriwai*  
 Coroner *John Roberts*

## PORGY \* AND \* BESS

*Residents of Catfish Row — Fishermen — Stevedores:*

Thelma Grabmaier, Margaret Kimura, Peti Rei, Mary Reid, Melva Puki, Polly Tarawhiti, Hera Wainohu, Loraine Bristowe, Ann Baird, Ngaire Karaka, Newha Taiaki, Josh Gardiner, Rangi Hapi, Kahu Karaitiana, Sid Reweti, George Henare, John Denny, Edward Huriwai, Tuta Kainamu, Bill Mataira, Don Selwyn, Ross Waters, George Wikaira, Peter Cowan.

**Children:** Mark and Jessica Metekingi, Api Taylor.

### MUSICAL STAFF:

*Chorus Master:* HARRY BRUSEY, O.B.E.

*Chief Repetiteur:* PATRICK FLYNN

*Repetiteur:* GWYNETH BROWN

*Resident Producer:* JOHN THOMPSON

## ACT I

the place: Charleston, South Carolina  
time: the recent past

SCENE 1. *Catfish Row. A summer evening*  
 SCENE 2. *Catfish Row. The following night*  
 SCENE 3. *Catfish Row. A month later*  
 SCENE 4. *Kiritiwah Island. Evening, of the same day*

## ACT II

SCENE 1. *Catfish Row. Before dawn a week later*  
 SCENE 2. *Serena's Room. Dawn of the following day*  
 SCENE 3. *Catfish Row. The next night*  
 SCENE 4. *Catfish Row. The following morning*  
 SCENE 5. *Catfish Row. Five days later, afternoon*

*Entire Production Directed by* ELLA GERBER

*Musical Director:* DOBBS FRANKS

*Designer:* JOHN BRAYDEN

## ORCHESTRA:

**THE NEW ZEALAND THEATRE ENSEMBLE: LEADER RUTH PEARL**

*Violins:* Ruth Pearl, Josephine Harding, Constance Parker; *Viola:* Vincent Edwards; *Cello:* Leslie Parker; *Flute:* Brian Boddis; *Oboe:* Luigi Ferletti; *Clarinets:* David Draper, Don Mori; *Bass Clarinet:* Antun Radaich; *Trumpet:* Stan Pheloung; *Percussion:* Ellis Horman.

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*And in Auckland and Hamilton* THE AUCKLAND SYMPHONIA (Leader: Helen Hopkins).

ORCHESTRAL CO-ORDINATOR: ASHLEY HEENAN

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*Stage Director* FRANK BROOMFIELD  
*Stage Manager* ROSS KNOFLOCK  
*Assistant Stage Manager* ERIC WOOD  
*Property Master* BERNARD REID  
*Assistant Property Master* JON WOOLF  
*Wardrobe Mistresses* TRUDY HEAP  
 LYNLEY THOMPSON  
*Chief Electrician* LAURENCE CRIGHTON  
*Chief Mechanist* JOHNNY BECKETT  
*Second Mechanist* 'RED' THOMPSON  
*Head Flyman* RONALD SCOTT

### CREDITS

*Scenery made by* NEW ZEALAND PLAYERS THEATRE TRUST — DOUG HOY  
*Special steps made by* A. I. VICTOR CO. LTD.  
*Scenery painted by* BRUCE WOODS  
*Special costumes made by* NANCY SEATON and PAT STAGGE  
*Hats made by* MRS E. A. WULFF  
*Shoes by* HANNAHS  
*Special properties by* ELIZABETH LOWRY  
*Scaffolding by* SAFEWAY SCAFFOLDING LTD  
*The modern lighting equipment used in this production is supplied to the Company by* STRAND ELECTRIC (LONDON) *through its agents* JOAN AND RUSSELL REID LTD. (WELLINGTON).  
*All sets in this production have been painted with* TAUBMANS DUO-PLASTIC GAYDEC  
*Photography by* JOHN ASHTON  
*Sportin' Life's suits* L. L. GREEN LTD.  
*Fork Lift Truck used for moving revolve supplied by* MASON BROTHERS

*Company Representative:* DONALD MUNRO  
*Tour Manager:* SYDNEY CRAWFORD

*Public Relations: Company:* CONSTANCE SCOTT  
*Auckland:* BEVERLEY SIMMONS

OUR OVERSEAS STARS FLY QANTAS

## The story of the opera

### ACT I

It is a summer evening and 'the living is easy', as Clara, a fisherman's wife sings a lullaby to her baby. Soon it will be time for the nightly dice game under the lamp-light. Robbins, a stevedore, joins the gamblers in spite of the protests of his wife, Serena, and the crapshooters begin to 'roll the bones'. Porgy, a crippled beggar, who makes his rounds in a little cart drawn by his trusty goat, enters the game to chance his luck with the 'buckra' (white folks') money he has gained in alms during the day. And so does Crown, a stevedore with a gladiator's body, a bad name and a taste for liquor, accompanied by his woman, Bess who is disdained by the respectable housewives of Catfish Row. Another player is Sportin' Life, a dope pedlar from New York's Harlem who has come South for reasons best known to himself to sell 'happy dust' (cocaine) along the water front. He has a lustful eye for Bess. Porgy worships her, too, from his knees. His is 'a sense of infinite patience, and beneath it the vibration of unrealised, but terrific energy . . . he was waiting, waiting with the concentrating intensity of a burning glass.'

Crown is drunk and roisterous and a sniff of Sportin' Life's 'happy dust' drives him amuck. He quarrels with Robbins over a throw of the dice and kills him with a stevedore's cotton hook. The game breaks up hurriedly and the tenants of the Row hasten indoors as the word police is whispered. Bess urges Crown to leave and he heads for the palmetto jungles of Kittiwah Island across the bay to wait till the hue-and-cry has died away. She seeks shelter, but the neighbours slam their doors in her face. Sportin' Life entices her to come with him to New York, but she spurns him and finds refuge within crippled Porgy's poor hovel.

It is night. Robbins' corpse lies shrouded and the neighbours file sadly past, each contributing to the saucer which holds the burial fund. Serena raises her voice in a dirge and the others join her lamentation. 'A white man enters, the protective curtain of silence which the negro draws about his life when the Caucasian intrudes hung almost tangibly in the air.'

It is a week later. The fishermen led by Clara's husband, Jake, depart for the Blackfish banks. The daytime life of Catfish Row goes serenely by. The strawberry woman with her traditional street cry, and the Crabman, make their rounds. Porgy sees a buzzard, a bird of ill omen, and drives it away. Bess is delirious. Porgy is distraught with fear that she will not recover. Serena prays for her, tells Porgy that Doctor Jesus has agreed to take the case, and she will soon be well again. Bess emerges from her fever to consciousness. She is full of shame and fear that Crown will return and snatch her away again, but Porgy soothes her and promises to protect her. Suddenly the tranquility of the

He is a detective, who warns Serena that unless her husband is buried next day his body will be turned over to medical students for dissection. After questioning he holds Peter, the meek Honeyman, as a material witness and takes him off to goal. The undertaker tells Serena that the collection reaches only 18 dollars, but he agrees to bury Robbins although he will be out of pocket.

It is morning some weeks later. The chimes of St. Michael's sound nine o'clock and the fishermen make their nets ready for next day's haul. Lawyer Frazier arrives and offers Bess a divorce from Crown for only a single dollar if there are no complications. But there are complications, however, for Bess was never married to Crown, but the lawyer promises to change Bess from 'woman to lady' for only fifty cents extra. Porgy, now settled down comfortably with Bess as his housekeeper, explains his philosophy of life to his neighbours. He has 'plenty of nothin', but 'nothin' plenty for me' as long as he has his gal, his song and heaven the whole day long. Sportin' Life tempts Bess with 'happy dust'. Maria and others pounce on Sportin' Life and tell him they hate his struttin' style. Porgy orders the dope peddler out of the courtyard. Bess is reluctant to join the annual picnic of the 'Repent Ye Saith The Lord' lodge, but Porgy persuades her to go with Maria as her escort. A happy procession forms and the neighbours depart for Kittiwah Island leaving Porgy alone. Sportin' Life tries hard to turn the innocent picnic on Kittiwah Island into an orgy. He sceptically reviews the bible stories of David and Goliath, Jonah and the Whale, and Moses and Pharaoh's daughter. As for Methuselah, what's the point of living to be nine hundred years old, if the girls won't look at you? Maria indignantly intervenes to restore decorum. The steamboat siren sounds and the picnickers depart for the mainland. Bess is last to leave. Crown springs out of a thicket and seizes her. She tells him that she now belongs to Porgy, but he roars with laughter and carries her, yielding, into the jungle.

### ACT II

afternoon is broken by the sharp peal of the hurricane bell, the wind rises and the shutters 'round Catfish Row rattle and bang in the gathering storm.

The neighbours huddle together for shelter in Serena's room, and sing hymns and spirituals for solace into the storm. There is a sudden knocking at the door and Crown breaks into the room. He has swum all the way from Kittiwah through the hurricane and demands that Bess return to him. He mocks the frightened neighbours, defies the thunder and lightning, and blasphemously claims God as his friend. In a

*continued on page 16*

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**MUSICAL NUMBERS**

**ACT I**

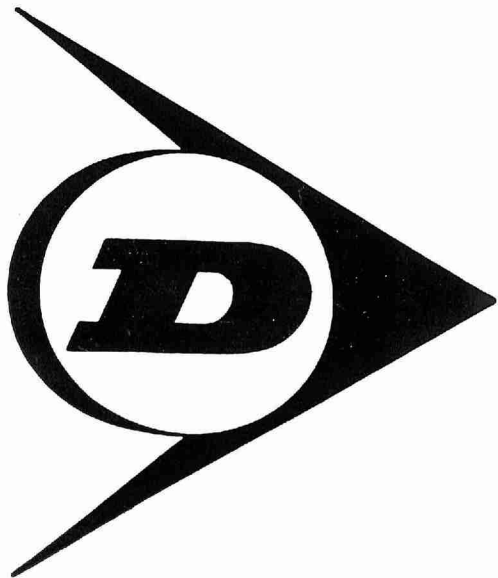
1. Lullaby, 'Summertime' .. .. . *Clara*
2. 'A Woman Is A Sometime Thing' .. .. . *Jake and Ensemble*
3. Entrance of Porgy: 'They Pass By Singing' .. .. . *Porgy*
4. Crap Game Fugue
5. 'Gone, Gone, Gone!' .. .. . *Ensemble*
6. 'Overflow' .. .. . *Ensemble*
7. Arisos: 'My Man's Gone Now' .. .. . *Serena and Ensemble*
8. Train Song: 'Leavin' Fo De Promis' Lan' .. .. . *Maria and Ensemble*
9. Rowing Song: 'It Take A Long Pull To Get There' .. .. . *Jake and Fishermen*
10. Divorce Scene: 'Woman To Lady' .. .. . *Porgy, Bess, Frazier and Ensemble*
11. 'I Got Plenty O' Nuttin'' .. .. . *Porgy*
12. Struttin' Style .. .. . *Maria and Sportin' Life*
13. Duet: 'Bess You Is My Woman Now' .. .. . *Porgy and Bess*
14. Picnic Song: 'Oh, I Can't Sit Down' .. .. . *Ensemble*
15. 'Ha Da Da' .. .. . *Ensemble*
16. 'It Ain't Necessarily So' .. .. . *Sportin' Life and Ensemble*

17. Duet: 'What You Want With Bess?' .. .. . *Crown and Bess*  
 \* \* \*

**ACT II**

1. Reprise: 'It Take A Long Pull' .. .. . *Jake and Fishermen*
2. Street Cries, Strawberry Woman, Crab Man
3. 'Time and Time Again' .. .. . *Serena and Ensemble*
4. 'Buzzard' .. .. . *Porgy and Ensemble*
5. Duet: 'I Loves You, Porgy' .. .. . *Porgy and Bess*
6. 'Oh, Doctor Jesus' .. .. . *Principals and Ensemble*
7. 'Oh, De Lawd Shake De Heaven' .. .. . *Ensemble*
8. 'Here's Somebody Knockin' At De Door' .. .. . *Ensemble*
9. 'A Red Headed Woman' .. .. . *Crown and Ensemble*
10. 'Clara, Don't You Be Downhearted' .. .. . *Ensemble*
11. 'Summertime' .. .. . *Bess*
12. 'Good Morning' .. .. . *Ensemble*
13. Trio .. .. . *Serena, Annie and Lily*
14. 'There's A Boat That's Leavin' Soon For New York' .. .. . *Sportin' Life and Bess*
15. 'Where's My Bess?' .. .. . *Porgy, Serena and Maria*
16. 'I'm On My Way' .. .. . *Porgy and Ensemble*

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*The chorus, with, in second to back row, chorus master, Harry Brusey (right) and chief répétiteur, Patrick Flynn*

**“I GOT PLENTY  
O’ NUTTIN’,  
AN’ NUTTIN’S  
PLENTY  
FO’ ME...”**

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## *Notes on the opera*

In 1926 George Gershwin fell in love with duBose Heyward's novel 'Porgy' and decided this was the story for his long planned opera. Heyward told him that he was in the process of dramatising the novel in collaboration with his wife, playwright Dorothy and suggested that the opera wait upon the play. The first production of the play, by the Theatre Guild, was staged in 1927. (Incidentally, it was in conjunction with Theatre Guild that the opera was eventually presented in 1935.)

It was 1933 before Gershwin was free to proceed with his plans and then, because he was tied by radio commitments to New York and because Heyward liked to work only in the South, the collaboration was done mainly by mail.

As the most difficult part for Heyward was cutting the dialogue by about half to fit into the scope of an opera, it was agreed that he would write the scenes and lyrics first and that they would call in Ira, George's brother, to write some of the lyrics. Heyward welcomed the chance to work with a lyric writer with as much theatrical experience as Ira and the lyrics were divided almost equally between them with Ira concentrating on the more sophisticated ones — notably Sportin' Life's songs — and Heyward on those portraying the more simple, genuine Negro emotions. They share the credit for 'Bess, You is my Woman now', 'I loves you, Porgy', 'Oh Red-Headed Woman' and 'Oh I can't sit down'.

In July 1934 George Gershwin went to live on Folly Island 10 miles off Charleston for 2 months to get the 'feel' of the people and he joined in their singing and shouting at revival meetings. The opera, which took him 11 months to compose and 9 months to orchestrate, was finished in September, 1935, and it was agreed to call it 'Porgy and Bess' to avoid confusion with the play.

It is interesting to note that at the time of the first production there were few negroes with professional operatic experience, just as at the time the New Zealand Opera Company's production was cast, there were few Maoris with professional operatic experience. The original cast included Todd Duncan as Porgy, Anne Brown as Bess and vaudeville players John W. Bubbles and Ford L. Buck as Sportin' Life and Mingo respectively. It opened in Boston, then played Broadway, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Chicago, Detroit and Washington, D.C. Since then, of course, it has toured the States dozens of times and played all round the world — except, until now, the South Pacific!

\* \* \*

"Porgy and Bess is not a work of social significance. It barely hints at the perplexed question of relations between the races that still agitates the national conscience, but beyond its synthesis of talents and act of co-operation between a Southern poet, self-emancipated from native prejudice, and a New York composer, only a generation removed from the Russian ghetto, the folk opera required for its fulfilment the dedication of a group of negro actors and singers, few of whom had ever themselves experienced a world like that of Catfish Row. The end result transcended its contributory parts, revealing not only a finished work of art but also of brotherhood."



## NEW ZEALAND OPERA COMPANY

gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the following local committees:

### CHRISTCHURCH

The New Zealand Opera Company's Christchurch Executive. *Chairman:* James Collins.

### INVERCARGILL

*Chairman:* Mr A. Walmsley. *Secretary:* Mrs P. O. McLean. *Front of House:* Mr G. Skipworth. *Publicity:* Mr W. W. Butchers. *Mesdames:* G. C. Martin, K. F. Nicholson. *Messrs:* R. Hewton, G. Mackinlay, J. W. Wood.

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### STORY OF THE OPERA (Continued from Page 10)

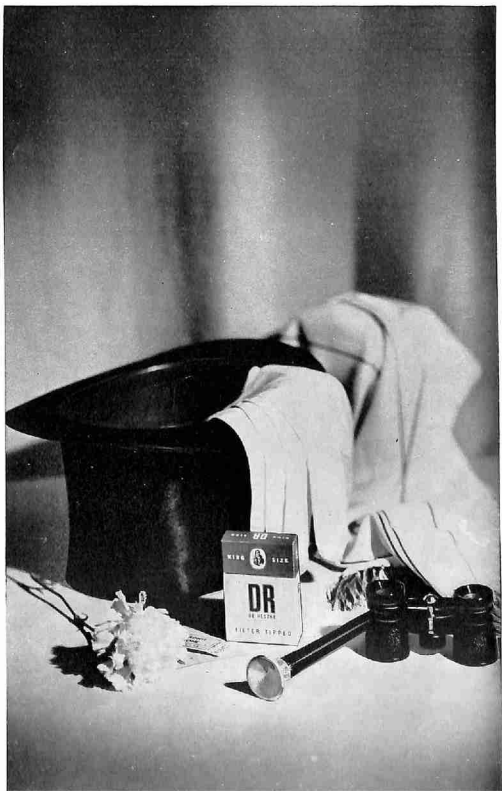
sudden lull in the storm, Clara looks out of the window and shrieks that her husband's boat has turned turtle in the river.

It is night and the storm has blown itself out. Bess nurses Clara's baby and Porgy sits watching at his window. Sportin' Life sneaks by and gleefully predicts Crown trouble between Porgy and Crown over Bess. Crown stealthily enters, creeps over to Porgy's door. The crippled beggar springs out at him, seizes the knife in Crown's hand and twists it into his body. Now he cries exultantly, Bess has her man.

Next morning the neighbours busily remove the traces of the night's struggle. A group of white men enter: the detective, the coroner, a policeman; and doors and shutters are closed on them. The detective

interrogates the neighbours, but they say they know nothing of what has happened. The Coroner explains that he is Porgy's friend and his room is pointed out. Porgy admits he knew Crown and is taken away as a witness to identify the body. Sportin' Life tells Bess that her man has gone for good. Now is the time for her to come to New York and enjoy life with him. He tempts her with 'happy dust' and she succumbs.

A week goes by and Catfish Row slumbers in the afternoon sun. Porgy returns home to everyone's delight. He brings presents for the women and children and a bright red gown for Bess. As he is about to enter his room the neighbours tell him sadly that Bess has gone away with Sportin' Life to New York. Porgy calls for his goat cart and leaves on the long journey north in search of his lost Bess.



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