

An Exceptional and Rare Grand Piano in Michaan's Winter Fine Sale.

As the year comes to a close,
Michaan's Auctions is busy as ever
preparing for our second Fine Sale of the
year, taking place on Monday, December
16th. In addition to our Monthly Gallery and
Annex auctions, December brings
Michaan's exciting and ultra-luxurious
Winter Fine Sale back to Alameda. At the
head of our Fine Sale, Furniture &
Decorations is honored to offer a **Schimmel
Pegasus Black Grand Piano** (\$50,000-
80,000), one of only fourteen made. The
piano comes to auction directly from the
couple who helped to sponsor the writing of
Ansel Adams: America by Dave Brubeck
and Chris Brubeck, as written on this very
instrument from 2008-2009.



Three of the fourteen Pegasus pianos
have been owned by Prince, Lenny Kravitz,
and Eddie Murphy, with this particular one
having belonged to Susan Carson, a now-
retired Stockton radio station owner and
self-described dilettante. This grand piano is
part of West Coast jazz history, as Carson
spearheaded the composing and showing of

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Ansel Adams: America, which was a multimedia orchestral piece; the show coordinated a vast musical opus with projections of 102 photographs by the San Francisco native, and premiered in April 2009 by the Stockton Symphony. The show found immense success, being nominated for a Grammy award in 2012, and has played across the country until as recently as November 2023 in Thousand Oaks, CA.

The music was composed by West Coast jazz legend Dave Brubeck and his



son, Chris Brubeck, and conducted by the Stockton Symphony maestro, Peter Jaffe. Dave Brubeck was a California born-and-raised jazz pianist and composer, and a foremost exponent of *cool jazz*, a modern style of jazz music that rose to popularity in the 1940s. The genre is characterized by its laid-back, subdued sound and relaxed tempos, and Brubeck's work set him apart from the crowd with its unusual time signatures and superimposed, contrasting rhythms. He used varied meters and tonalities, and combined styles and genres to create a new sound entirely different from its parent genres: classic, jazz, blues, and the like. Brubeck's 1959 album, *Time Out*, was the first jazz album to sell over one million copies, and earned him a reputation as 'one of jazz's first pop stars.' His style ranged from refined to bombastic, and reflected both the classical training as a pianist that

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his mother gave him, and his own improvisational skills.

Susan Carson, however, was the driving force behind this collaboration of great artists. She had become involved with the organization “Meet the Composer,” an association designed to support composers in making a living through music by directly connecting the public with musical composers. In 2006, Carson and Jennifer Basye Sander, a board member of the Sacramento Philharmonic Orchestra, had the idea to commission a work honoring the iconic photographer Ansel Adams, and thought Dave and Chris Brubeck were the perfect musical fit. Carson described how “you have two men – Dave and Ansel – both of whom are icons, both of whom have been on the cover of Time Magazine, and both of whom are California landmarks.”

Ansel Adams was born in San Francisco, and mainly photographed landscape scenes of the American West, like Yosemite, Glacier National Park, and the Grand Tetons. Further, Ansel Adams



himself trained to be a classical musician and, according to Chris Brubeck, was “well on his way to becoming a serious concert pianist until he was seduced by the beauty of Yosemite and succumbed to the lure of photography.” Chris went on to say that this fact inspired him to read Adams’

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autobiography, which only further convinced him to go forward with Carson and Sander's proposal. Despite Chris Brubeck's enthusiasm for this project, convincing Dave (and their team of lawyers) was a bit trickier. To start, Dave was 83 at the time, and it proved difficult to convince their lawyers that Susan and Jennifer were not only serious about the project, but knew what they were doing. After being given the green light from all parties, this project became the first time that permission has been given to use Ansel Adams' photographs in a concert setting.

Then, the composing began. Once the show began its national tour of the United States in April of 2009, it found immediate success. It drew new audiences to symphony halls, which was one of the main intentions of the piece. The combination of jazz music, a symphony orchestra, and

Adams' photography appealed to a large population that likely would not have attended a symphony show otherwise. The show has toured in over 20 states, as well as France, and was nominated for a Grammy award in 2012.

The cultural significance of this piano is incredible, seeing as it played a direct role in the composing of *Ansel Adams: America*, because Dave and Chris Brubeck composed the show on it. This truly is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to not



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only own a rare Schimmel piano, but one with such an interesting story and driven consignor, the lovely Susan Carson.

This stunning **Schimmel Pegasus Black Grand Piano** (\$50,000-80,000) will be offered in our Winter Fine Sale, which opens on Monday, December 16th. Live bidding starts at 10am in our showroom at 2701 Monarch Street, Alameda, California. If you're unable to join us live, in-person, we also offer online bidding through our platform, Michaan's Live, or through LiveAuctioneers, and accept both absentee and phone bids. Visit our website, www.michaans.com, for more information on the bidding process, how to register with us, and where to view our catalogs.

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