



Katie mahan  
**CLASSICAL**  
PERSHWIN



STEINWAY & SONS



George Gershwin is the quintessential American composer. His music is as iconic to the soul of metropolitan America as is that of Debussy to France, Mozart to Austria, or Tchaikovsky to Russia. He gave a unique musical voice to his time and place, and his music immortalizes through art the best that America has ever represented. It personifies the amazing mixture of people and cultures, the glitz and glamour, the freshness and the spirit of freedom, the chance to hope and to dream big. Gershwin's song melodies are part of the American consciousness and are beloved throughout the world. Yet, it is as a 'serious' classical composer that he most desired to be remembered and respected. This album is therefore dedicated to the memory of the "Classical Gershwin" - the Gershwin whose music brought crowds to the classical concert halls, the Gershwin whose concert works attracted the attention of classical stars like Rachmaninov, Stokowski, and Koussevitzky, the Gershwin who successfully incorporated the nuances of jazz and popular music to create a classical music that was uniquely and authentically American.

The arrangements presented on this album are carefully conceived in a classical style rather than an improvisatory style, paying tribute to Gershwin's desire for his music to be part of the classical concert idiom. They seek to capture the spontaneity and innate freedom inherent to Gershwin's jazz spirit, but are performed not in a jazz manner, but rather as a classical pianist envisions and interprets them. The program selections are bookmarked by Gershwin's two rhapsodies - Rhapsody in Blue and the Second Rhapsody. In these works, we hear the evolution of Gershwin's personality and character, and can trace his personal and compositional development over the eight years that separate them. In between the rhapsodies are some of Gershwin's most beloved song melodies, showing the composer's lighter side. Although primarily composed as popular songs for musicals, they nevertheless contain the wealth of compositional qualities that are found in the two rhapsodies, and are equally innovative in their own musical character.

Many composers have one piece that is so great that it defines him for life, but it is the true genius that uses that piece as a starting point from which he then continues to grow and develop. Gershwin was certainly such an example, and the transition from the composer of popular songs to the composer of respected classical concert works - that he so ardently strived to become - gives a glimpse of his genius. Like all great composers, Gershwin created a sound that was uniquely his own, and whether popular songs or concert works, his compositions are immediately identifiable and could not have been written by anyone else but George Gershwin. His music is authentically American, and his unique musical idiom is responsible for the creation of a truly “American” classical music. In the words of Leonard Bernstein, “Gershwin was, and remains, one of the greatest voices that ever rang out in the history of American urban culture.”

Along with the 9 tracks on “Classical Gershwin” Ms. Mahan also presents a bonus video of Rhapsody in Blue brought to life as a musical journey through Gershwin’s beloved New York City. Filmed in New York, it tells the interesting story behind this great work, which was composed in a matter of hours on a train ride from New York to Boston. The video opens with the arrival of an old steam engine like Gershwin would have taken in 1924, and proceeds to take the viewer on a journey through Gershwin’s world, from the hustle and bustle of the busy train stations and subways, to the quiet streets of Brooklyn where Gershwin grew up, to the jazz clubs of Harlem that were filled with the sound of the African-American blues. Midway through the journey, there is a flashback to the concert stage, reminding the viewer of the famous concert entitled “An Experiment in Modern Music” where Rhapsody in Blue was premiered with Gershwin himself at the piano. The journey then continues onwards through the beauty and grandeur of the New York skyline to the glitz and glamour of Broadway and Times Square before finally arriving back, as if in a beautiful dream, to the old steam engine where the journey began. By re-enacting the historical background of the piece, the video allows the viewer to become part of Gershwin’s world and to better understand the feelings, emotions and creative power that inspired Gershwin to become one of the greatest voices of America in the 20th century.

# CLASSICAL FRISCHWIN

Sound recording produced by Emil Berliner Studios GmbH, Berlin

Recording Engineer (Tonmeister): Rainer Maillard

Microphones: Sennheiser MKH 800 TWIN, Sennheiser MKH 20

Equipment: RME MICSTASY Preamp & AD-Converter

Editing & Mastering: Rainer Maillard, Justus Beyer

Recording Location: Jesus-Christus-Kirche, Berlin-Dahlem

Piano: Steinway D (Hamburg), provided by Steinway-Haus Berlin

Producer: Micki Meuser

Photos: Joshua Bauer

Distributed by: Steinway & Sons

## **Bonus Video “Rhapsody in Blue”**

Produced by Katie Mahan

Concept & Video Editing: Katie Mahan

Audio Engineer: Rainer Maillard

Camera: Joshua Bauer

Additional Cameras: Harv Mahan, Kris Mahan

Film Location: New York City, Circuit Studios, Colorado Railroad Museum

Special Thanks: Schmitt Music Denver, Coit Cleaning & Restoration

Additional Thanks: Alexander Gappmaier

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# CLASSICAL GERSHWIN

- |                                      |         |
|--------------------------------------|---------|
| 1. rhapsody in blue                  | [16:09] |
| 2. embraceable you                   | [03:29] |
| 3. our love is here to stay          | [03:51] |
| 4. i got rhythm                      | [02:08] |
| 5. they can't take that away from me | [04:38] |
| 6. walking the dog                   | [04:24] |
| 7. fascinating rhythm                | [01:44] |
| 8. 's wonderful / funny face         | [03:30] |
| 9. second rhapsody                   | [16:14] |

## Bonus Video: “Rhapsody in Blue”

*a music video of Rhapsody in Blue produced & performed by Katie Mahan*

katie mahan, piano



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