

### Chapter 1 : Rhapsody In Blue (Original) Sheet Music By George Gershwin - Sheet Music Plus

*piano duet: Aldo De Crescenzo & Pier Giorgio De Lucia.*

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Commission[ edit ] After the success of an experimental classical-jazz concert held with French-Canadian singer Eva Gauthier at Aeolian Hall New York on November 1, , band leader Paul Whiteman decided to attempt something more ambitious. Whiteman became interested in featuring such an extended composition by Gershwin in the concert after he had collaborated with Gershwin in the Scandals of , impressed by the original performance of the one-act opera Blue Monday , which was nevertheless a commercial failure. Gershwin declined on the grounds that, as there would certainly be need for revisions to the score, he would not have enough time to compose the new piece. Composition[ edit ] Since there were only five weeks left, Gershwin hastily set about composing a piece, and on the train journey to Boston , the ideas of Rhapsody in Blue came to his mind. He told his first biographer Isaac Goldberg in No new themes came to me, but I worked on the thematic material already in my mind and tried to conceive the composition as a whole. I heard it as a sort of musical kaleidoscope of America, of our vast melting pot, of our unduplicated national pep, of our metropolitan madness. By the time I reached Boston I had a definite plot of the piece, as distinguished from its actual substance. The purpose of the experiment, as told by Whiteman in a pre-concert lecture in front of many classical music critics and highbrows, was "to be purely educational". It would "at least provide a stepping stone which will make it very simple for the masses to understand, and therefore, enjoy symphony and opera". The program was long, including 26 separate musical movements, divided into 2 parts and 11 sections, bearing titles such as "True form of jazz" and "Contrast: People in the audience were losing their patience, until the clarinet glissando that opened Rhapsody in Blue was heard. Gershwin improvised some of what he was playing, and he did not write out the piano part until after the performance, so it is unknown exactly how the original Rhapsody sounded. The opening clarinet glissando came into being during rehearsal when; " This composition shows extraordinary talent, as it shows a young composer with aims that go far beyond those of his ilk, struggling with a form of which he is far from being master In spite of all this, he has expressed himself in a significant and, on the whole, highly original form The second theme is more after the manner of some of Mr. Tuttis are too long, cadenzas are too long, the peroration at the end loses a large measure of the wildness and magnificence it could easily have had if it were more broadly prepared, and, for all that, the audience was stirred and many a hardened concertgoer excited with the sensation of a new talent finding its voice How trite, feeble and conventional the tunes are; how sentimental and vapid the harmonic treatment, under its disguise of fussy and futile counterpoint! Weep over the lifelessness of the melody and harmony, so derivative, so stale, so inexpressive! Pitts Sanborn wrote that the music "runs off into empty passage-work and meaningless repetition". The Rhapsody is not a composition at all. The themes are terrific, inspired, God-given. Your Rhapsody in Blue is not a real composition in the sense that whatever happens in it must seem inevitable. You can remove any of these stuck-together sections and the piece still goes on as bravely as before. It can be a five-minute piece or a twelve-minute piece. And in fact, all these things are being done to it every day. The prominence of the saxophones in the later orchestrations is somewhat reduced, and the banjo part can be dispensed with, as its mainly rhythmic contribution is provided by the inner strings. Gershwin also made versions of the piece for solo piano as well as two pianos. The latter version was actually conducted by Nathaniel Shilkret after an argument between Gershwin and Whiteman. Since the midth century, the version has usually been performed by classical orchestras playing the expanded arrangement. In this form, it has become a staple of the concert repertoire. It has direct popular appeal while also being regarded respectfully by classical musicians. In , the piece was recorded by jazz-rock artist Eumir Deodato on his album Deodato 2. The single reached Billboard peak positions number 41 Pop, number 10 Easy Listening. A disco arrangement was recorded by French pianist Richard Clayderman in and is one of his signature pieces. In the late s, interest in the original arrangement was revived. On February 14, , it received its first performance since the s: Kenneth Kiesler secured needed permissions and led with work with pianist Paul Verrette on his U. Michel Camilo recorded the piece in , winning a Latin Grammy award. Analysis[ edit ] George Gershwin

playing his Rhapsody in Blue, February 24, Paul Whiteman asked Gershwin to write a "jazz concerto", which became the Rhapsody in Blue; like a concerto, the piece is written for solo piano with orchestra: The music ranges from intensely rhythmic piano solos to slow, broad, and richly orchestrated sections. The opening of Rhapsody in Blue is written as a clarinet trill followed by a legato, 17 notes in a diatonic scale. Gershwin heard it and insisted that it be repeated in the performance. This effect has now become standard performance practice for the work. The piece is characterized by strong motivic interrelatedness. Much of the motivic material is introduced in the first 14 measures. David Schiff identifies five major themes plus a sixth "tag". Two of the remaining three themes are rhythmically related to the very first theme in measure 2, which is sometimes called the Glissando theme after the opening glissando in the clarinet solo or the Ritornello theme. The remaining theme is the Train theme, which is the first to appear at rehearsal 9 after the opening material. All of the themes rely on the blues scale, which includes lowered sevenths and a mixture of major and minor thirds. Each theme appears both in orchestrated form and as a piano solo. There are considerable differences in the style of presentation of each theme. The harmonic structure of Rhapsody is more difficult to analyse. Modulation through the circle of fifths in the reverse direction inverts classical tonal relationships, but does not abandon them. The entire middle section resides primarily in C major, with forays into G major the dominant relation. Modulations occur freely and easily, though not always with harmonic direction. Gershwin frequently uses a recursive harmonic progression of minor thirds to give the illusion of motion when in fact a passage does not change key from beginning to end. Modulation by thirds was a common element of Tin Pan Alley music. The influences of jazz and other contemporary styles are certainly present in Rhapsody in Blue. Ragtime rhythms are abundant, as is the Cuban "clave" rhythm, which doubles as a dance rhythm in the Charleston jazz dance. The clearest influence of jazz is the use of blue notes, and the exploration of their half-step relationship plays a key role in the Rhapsody. Gershwin incorporated several different piano styles into the work. He utilized the techniques of stride piano, novelty piano, comic piano, and the song-plugger piano style. Novelty piano can be heard at rehearsal 9 with the revelation of the Train theme. The hesitations and light-hearted style of comic piano, a vaudeville approach to piano made well known by Chico Marx and Jimmy Durante, are evident at rehearsal 10. Brian Wilson, leader of The Beach Boys, has said on multiple occasions that Rhapsody in Blue is one of his favorite pieces. He first heard it when he was two years old, and recalls that he "loved" it. It was also a heavy influence on his Smile album. He also came to think of "Good Vibrations" as "a smaller, psychedelic version of Rhapsody in Blue". The Gershwin family, working in conjunction with the Library of Congress and the University of Michigan, are working to make these scores available to the public.

### Chapter 3 : Rhapsody in Blue: Piano Duet (1 Piano, 4 Hands) Sheet: George Gershwin

*Rhapsody in Blue has been restored to Gershwin's original manuscript by the talented Alicia Zizzo. This special edition includes an addendum to the two piano, four hands edition and the fully restored piano manuscript.*

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