

The **COMPLETE** Gershwin® Preludes for piano

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*Alde de Mattos
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INTRODUCTION TO PERFORMANCE NOTES

In the March 1925 issue of Vanity Fair Magazine, Carl Van Vechten mentions that George Gershwin was working on a collection of twenty four preludes titled "The Melting Pot." Gershwin might very well have been inspired by the twenty four Chopin Preludes which are as diverse from one another as Gershwin's.

The perception of a melting pot as it represented American life in the early part of the twentieth century seems to permeate Gershwin's musical ideas; witness Swanee, Lullaby, Blue Monday, Delicious (the 1931 Screenplay), the Rhapsody in Blue (as the first major American work encompassing cross-cultural musical idioms), An American In Paris, the Preludes (which run the gamut from Klezmar and Jazz to Latin rhythmic motifs), and of course Porgy & Bess.

Although three Preludes were published in 1927, Ira Gershwin confirmed that there were indeed some unpublished pieces intended as Preludes. The mystery of the "lost" Preludes is addressed by Edward Jablonski in his book "Gershwin: A Biography." Mr. Jablonski writes: "The creation or evolution of the collection published as Preludes for piano is shadowy. The pieces Gershwin performed... on December 5, 1926 numbered five." He goes on to confirm that the two "lost" preludes were the Novelette in Fourths and Rubato - to be joined in a later concert by Melody No. 17 (The future Sleepless Night). In my opinion, a resolution to this half-century old puzzle might be found in the fact that in 1925 George Gershwin agreed to allow his friend and colleague Samuel Dushkin to arrange Novelette in Fourths and Rubato as a violin-piano piece which was published as such and titled "Short Story." As for Melody No. 17, Gershwin set this piece aside for later use as a song. In 1946 Kay Swift reworked Sleepless Night, but no lyrics were written for it and it was never published.

There is yet another fragment which bears the name Prelude and is dated January, 1925. It is probably the first prelude Gershwin composed specifically for his collection but was never included in his public performances as it became the opening of the third movement of his forthcoming Concerto in F which premiered in December, 1925.

To Bill Daly Prelude I (1926)

By GEORGE GERSHWIN
Edited by ALICIA ZIZZO

Allegro ben ritmato e deciso

f con licenza

ff a tempo

col 8
Ed.

f

ff

f

ff

mf

ff