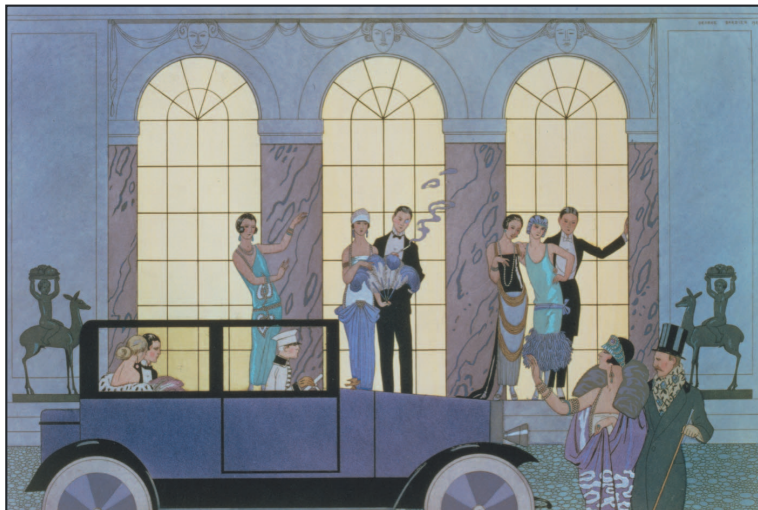


GERSHWIN FOR TRUMPET

It ain't necessarily so • Embraceable you
and other great songs arranged for trumpet and piano

Juraj Bartos, Trumpet • Peter Breiner, Piano



IT AIN'T NECESSARILY SO

and other Gershwin arrangements for trumpet and piano by Peter Breiner and Juraj Bartos

Hollywood, early 1937. Having returned home from an evening out with friends, George Gershwin sat down to work with his housemate and principal creative collaborator — his brother Ira. George wrote the music, Ira the lyrics, inspiring his brother with a line or two, or even a title. That night, as on so many other occasions, Ira suggested a few words which led to another hit for the already hugely successful partnership. It was an idea for a song for Fred Astaire, Ira saying, "... how about "a foggy day in London"... ?" George liked it, and "[they] finished the refrain, words and music, in less than an hour". The next day they started on the verses, which took a while, as Ira remembered later, since they always put a lot into the verses, making them just as good as the refrain, even if audiences did not pay them as much attention.

George Gershwin wrote large-scale works such as the symphonic *Rhapsody in Blue* and the opera *Porgy and Bess*, but was first and foremost one of the greatest tunesmiths of all time, from *Swanee* (1919), the song that confirmed the young Tin Pan Alley song-plugger's status as a composer, to *Love is here to stay*, unfinished at his death in 1937. His tunes turned into songs which were then gathered together to create stage and screen musicals, although the songs often bore little relation to their story-lines. Indeed in some cases the story-line's sole function seemed to be simply to introduce one song or another. One song might also sometimes appear in more than one musical, for example *The man I love*, one of the Gershwins' most famous creations, originally written for *Lady, be good* (1924). Try-outs in Philadelphia did not go well and George reworked the score, leaving out *The man I love*. A few years later he included it in

Strike up the band, without much more success, and then in *Rosalie* (1928), dropping it again before the musical was even given its first performance. It finally became a hit in a London night-club, returning to the United States in triumph.

When songs were not met by uncomprehending audiences, they were sometimes met by uncomprehending publishers. The publisher of *By Strauss*, for instance, wrote to Gershwin to complain about the length of the verse and asking him to make some cuts. The composer refused, suggesting instead that they make particular mention of the length so that potential purchasers would know that they were getting more for their money, and adding that if the song did not sell, at least his grandchildren would be proud of a grandfather who had taken so much trouble over his verses.

A few weeks after writing *A Foggy Day*, the Gershwins were working on the chorus of *Love is here to stay* for *The Goldwyn Follies* of 1938, when George's headaches became too severe to allow him to continue. He was operated on for a brain tumour but did not survive the surgery. Just a few months later Ravel died in Paris in similar circumstances, a coincidence linking two composers who had more in common than might be thought (Ravel had refused to teach Gershwin composition on the grounds that the world of music needed a Gershwin more than it did a second Ravel), specifically a capacity for concealing beneath a certain dandyism a very profound emotion, the kind of emotion that pervades more than one song in the programme recorded here, and which was particularly well conveyed in performance by Fred Astaire. ("Astaire" was by chance the last word spoken

by Gershwin.)

Shortly after his death on 11th July 1937, a tribute concert to Gershwin was held featuring the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Otto Klemperer, Oscar Levant, Al Jolson and Lily Pons, as well as Astaire, who sang *They can't take that away from me*. And no one can

take away from George Gershwin the place he occupies in the heart of all musicians.

Philippe Danel

English Version: Susannah Howe

Juraj Bartos

Born in 1967, Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia, Juraj Bartos has played the trumpet since he was seven and played in his uncle's amateur dance-band in Moravia. He studied at the University of Arts in Bratislava, won the Slovak Conservatories Competition, and received an honorable mention as a finalist of the 1992 Prague Spring International Competition, and the Diplôme de Lauréat in 1995 at the fifteenth Tribune Internationale des Jeunes Interprètes, held by UNESCO. Since 1991 he has served as a principal of the Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra, and has appeared as a soloist throughout Europe. He has always had a parallel career in jazz, winning awards and appearing with a number of well-known ensembles and performers in Slovakia and abroad.

Peter Breiner

Slovak born Canadian composer Peter Breiner, known internationally for a multiplicity of recordings, broadcasts, telecasts and concert appearances, began to play the piano at the age of four. When he was nine he started his formal training at the Košice Conservatory, where he studied piano, percussion, composition and conducting. His later training was at the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava, where he was a composition pupil of Alexander Moyzes, completing his higher level studies there in 1982, thereafter to pursue a multi-faceted career as composer, conductor, arranger and pianist. Peter Breiner is proficient in eight languages, frequently hosting his own performances. His international career has brought a wide range of concerts, often in the combined roles of pianist and conductor in his original compositions, and a repertoire that ranges from Mozart to Gershwin and beyond. Performances of this kind include playing Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* in Hong Kong before an audience of 70,000, in the course of a busy international career. Peter Breiner's witty arrangements include award-winning Baroque versions of the Beatles and a similar adaptation of Elvis Presley and of popular Christmas music, in addition to more serious arrangements and compositions. His recordings reflect his wide musical interests, spanning jazz, of which he has had long and significant experience, pop music and the classical repertoire. He has been the leading figure of many jazz and fusion formations and has performed at numerous jazz festivals. Additionally, he has composed film music. The International Olympic Committee has assigned Peter Breiner the immense task of arranging, orchestrating and conducting 204 national anthems for the Summer Olympics 2004.

IT AIN'T NECESSARILY SO

et d'autres arrangements de Gershwin pour trompette et piano réalisés par Peter Breiner et Juraj Bartos

Hollywood, début 1937. Rentrant d'une soirée passée avec des amis, George Gershwin retrouve Ira, le frère avec qui il partage non seulement sa maison, mais aussi l'essentiel de son activité créatrice. Ira écrit les textes, George compose la musique. Ce soir-là justement, Ira soumet à son frère quelques mots qui lui sont venus à l'esprit. C'est ainsi, d'un titre, d'un début de texte suggéré par Ira, et qui inspire à George une musique, que naissent la plupart des chansons d'un tandem désormais bien rodé. « George, j'ai une idée pour Fred Astaire. Qu'est-ce que tu dis d' « un jour de brouillard à Londres » ? » « Pas mal », répond George, qui se met immédiatement au travail. « Une demi-heure plus tard », raconte Ira, « on avait le refrain de *Foggy Day*. Après quoi il fallut écrire les couplets, ce qui nous prit un certain temps. Car nous faisons très attention aux couplets, afin qu'ils soient aussi bons que les refrains, même si plus personne n'y faisait attention. »

Compositeur de pièces symphoniques, en particulier de la fameuse *Rhapsody in Blue*, d'un opéra, *Porgy and Bess*, Gershwin est avant tout l'un des meilleurs mélodistes de l'histoire de la musique, un compositeur de chansons, de celle qui permet au jeune *songplugger*, pianiste démonstrateur au service d'un éditeur de Tin Pan Alley de s'affirmer comme compositeur, *Swanee* (1919), à *Love is here to stay*, qu'il laisse inachevée à sa mort (1937).

Les mélodies se font chansons, elles-mêmes s'assemblant pour constituer la musique de comédies musicales, de films, chansons et scénarios des unes et des autres n'ayant parfois que peu de rapports. Souvent d'ailleurs le scénario semble n'avoir d'autre fonction que d'introduire telle ou telle chanson. Il arrive aussi qu'une chanson passe d'une comédie musicale à une

autre. C'est le cas de l'une des plus fameuses chansons des frères Gershwin, *The man I love*, initialement composée pour *Lady, Be Good* (1924). L'échec de la comédie musicale à Philadelphie conduit Gershwin à en remanier la partition, et à supprimer *The man I love*. Quelques années plus tard, il réintroduit la chanson dans *Strike up the band*, sans plus de succès. *The man I love* trouve ensuite place dans *Rosalie* (1928), d'où elle est retirée avant même la création de comédie musicale. La « chanson trois fois orpheline » (Ira Gershwin) rencontre finalement le succès dans une boîte de nuit de Londres, d'où elle revient triomphalement aux Etats-Unis.

Lorsque l'incompréhension n'est pas le fait du public, il arrive qu'elle émane de l'éditeur. C'est ainsi que celui qui doit éditer *By Strauss* écrit à Gershwin pour se plaindre de la longueur exceptionnelle de son couplet, et lui demander d'y apporter des coupures. Gershwin refuse, suggérant à l'éditeur d'annoncer cette particularité afin que les acheteurs potentiels sachent qu'ils en auront davantage pour leur argent, et ajoutant que si malgré tout la chanson ne se vend pas, il est préférable que ses petits-enfants soient fiers d'un grand-père qui s'est donné tant de mal à propos de ses couplets.

Quelques semaines après *Foggy Day*, les frères Gershwin travaillent à *Love is here to stay*, chanson destinée aux *Goldwyn Follies* de 1938. Ils en écrivent le chœur, mais doivent s'interrompre. Les maux de tête dont souffre George sont devenus trop violents, et Ira doit l'emmener à l'hôpital, où le musicien subit une opération à laquelle il ne survit pas. Quelques mois plus tard Ravel mourra à Paris dans des circonstances similaires, coïncidence qui rapproche deux musiciens

qu'au delà de différences apparentes - Ravel avait refusé de donner des cours de composition à Gershwin, affirmant que la musique avait davantage besoin d'un Gershwin que d'un second Ravel - certains traits rapprochaient, en particulier la capacité à cacher sous des airs de dandy une émotion sincère, telle celle qui imprègne plus d'une des chansons du présent programme, et qu'un Fred Astaire rendait avec un bonheur particulier. Astaire est d'ailleurs le dernier mot que prononce Gershwin avant de se taire.

Peu après sa disparition, le 11 juillet 1937, l'orchestre de Los Angeles rendit à Gershwin un hommage auquel participaient Otto Klemperer et Oscar Levant, Al Jolson et Lily Pons. Fred Astaire chanta *They can't take that away from me*. Personne ne pourrait désormais priver Gershwin de la place qu'il occupe dans le cœur de tous les musiciens.

Philippe Danel



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Playing Time
50:15

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Gershwin, along with Irving Berlin, Cole Porter and Richard Rodgers contributed more to popular song in the 20th century than any other composer. His songs defined an era and, adopted as jazz standards and immortalised by such performers as Ella Fitzgerald, Judy Garland and Fred Astaire, now have a global resonance. Here, some of his most popular songs including *The man I love*, *It ain't necessarily so* and *They can't take that away from me* are presented in dazzling arrangements for trumpet and piano by Peter Breiner and Juraj Bartos.

GERSHWIN FOR TRUMPET

arrangements for trumpet and piano

by Peter Breiner and Juraj Bartos

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|------|
| 1 | But not for me | 5:04 |
| 2 | They can't take that away from me | 5:34 |
| 3 | The man I love | 4:39 |
| 4 | How long has this been going on? | 6:06 |
| 5 | Embraceable You | 5:07 |
| 6 | A foggy day | 8:31 |
| 7 | It ain't necessarily so | 4:56 |
| 8 | Love is here to stay | 2:47 |
| 9 | By Strauss | 6:05 |
| 10 | But not for me | 1:26 |

Juraj Bartos, Trumpet • Peter Breiner, Piano

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Music Notes: Philippe Danel (English version: Susannah Howe)

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