GERSHWIN®

THREE PRELUDES

Edited by Maurice Hinson

Contents

Foreword 2

Gershwin as Composer 2

Gershwin as Pianist 3

Performing Gershwin's Piano Pieces 3

About This Edition 3

Acknowledgements 3

Suggested Further Reading 3

About the Music 3

Prelude I (1927) 4

Prelude II (Blue Lullaby) (1927) 8

Prelude III (Spanish Prelude) 12

Foreword

George Gershwin (1898–1937) was one of the most imaginative American composers of the 1920s and '30s. He fused elements of jazz with European symphonic tradition. His major works that combined both traditions, such as *Rhapsody in Blue*, *Concerto in F*, *An American in Paris* and *Porgy and Bess*, display a rich and diversified style that is completely and unmistakably American. Upon first hearing Gershwin, audiences went wild with enthusiasm and agreed that here was a fresh, brilliant talent with a great future. This editor grew up playing and singing Gershwin's music, and is delighted to be able to share the wonderful gems included in this collection.

Gershwin as Composer

George Gershwin grew up in Brooklyn, New York as part of a Russian immigrant family. His parents, Moshe and Rose Gershovitz, had come to the United States in the 1890s. Neither of his parents was musical; however, George found a fellow artist in his older brother Ira, who wrote many of the lyrics for his songs.

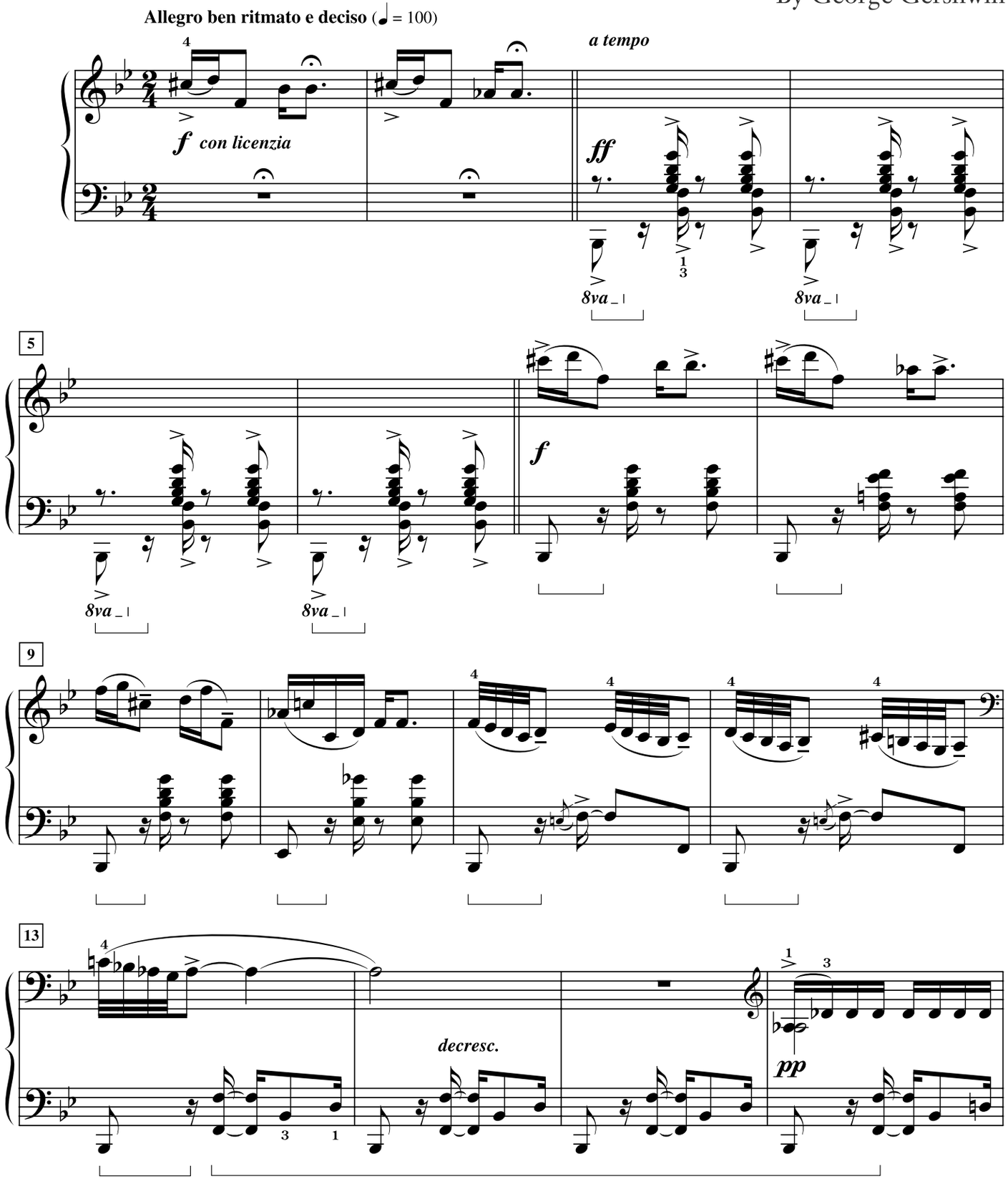
After the Gershwins bought a piano in 1912, George began studying with neighborhood teachers. He later studied with Rubin Goldmark (1872–1936), Wallingford Riegger (1885–1961), Henry Cowell (1897–1965), Joseph Schillinger (1895–1943) and Edward Kilenyi (1884–1968). At the age of 15, George was hired by the music publishing firm Jerome H. Remick & Co. as a "song plugger"—a pianist who played and sang songs for prospective customers. He made his first piano rolls in 1915 and began composing piano pieces. He also composed musical comedies, which were very successful. George later experimented with jazz and popular idioms, and he incorporated these types of music into his orchestral compositions. His major works include *Rhapsody in Blue* (1924), *Concerto in F* (1925), *An American in Paris* (1928) and the American folk opera *Porgy and Bess* (1935). In 1932, Gershwin created wonderful piano arrangements of 18 of his song hits, some of which are included in this collection.

Gershwin was one of the most gifted American composers in terms of pure native talent. Out of the elements of jazz, ragtime and blues, he created a musical language that was fresh, spontaneous and, above all, American. Soon after the first season of *Porgy and Bess*, Gershwin became ill. He was only 39 years old when he died in 1937 of a brain hemorrhage.

Prelude I

(1927)

By George Gershwin



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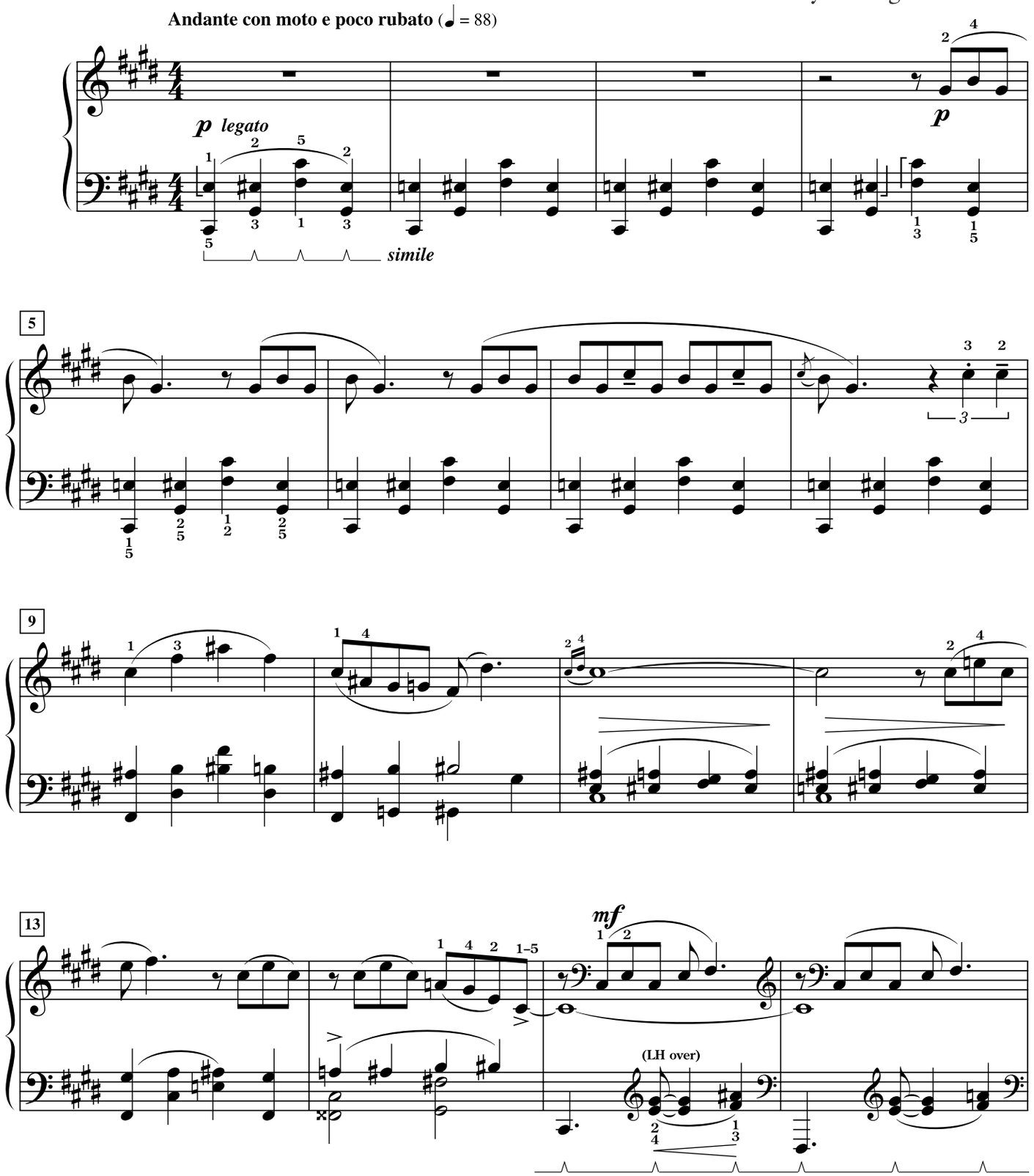
Prelude II

(Blue Lullaby)
(1927)

By George Gershwin



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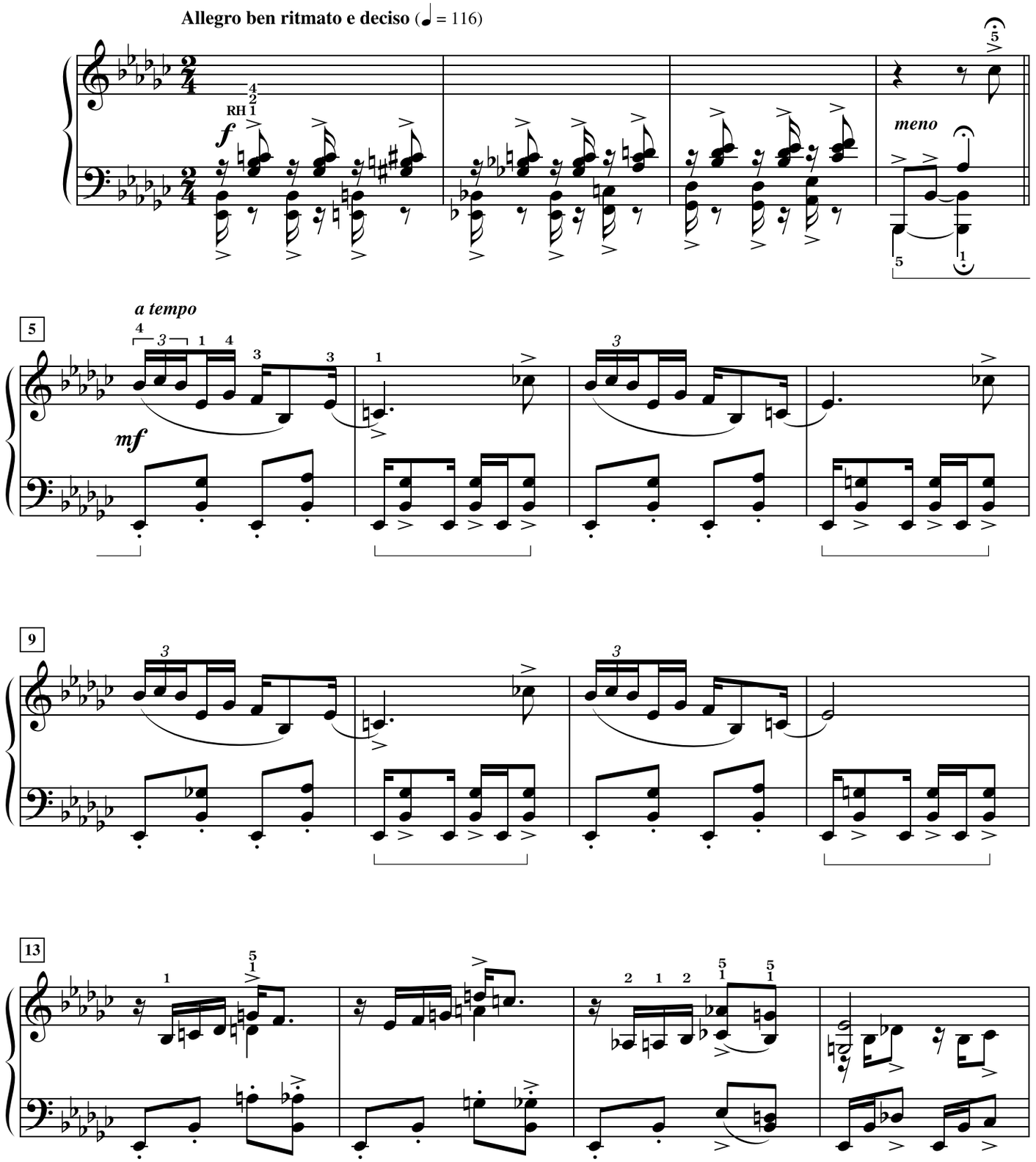
Prelude III
(Spanish Prelude)

By George Gershwin



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