

RWS CONCERT STRINGS SERIES

Grade: 3

Conductor Score: RWS-2687-01

Second Prelude

George Gershwin

Transcribed by

Ben Hawkins

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RWS

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RWS MUSIC
COMPANY

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INSTRUMENTATION

Conductor Score.....	1
Violin 1.....	8
Violin 2.....	8
Viola.....	6
Cello.....	5
Double Bass.....	5

PROGRAM NOTE

The *Three Preludes* for piano are the only solo piano works by George Gershwin (1898-1937) published during his lifetime. Gershwin's 1923 remark, "I don't think jazz will ever be appropriate for concerts. They won't get it," was proved wrong by the spectacular success in 1924 of "Rhapsody in Blue." The Preludes were premiered by the composer in December 1926, in New York City, as members of a set of five. Two of these were never published, and are lost, as are two others which are thought to have been written. One journalist of the time even asserted that Gershwin eventually intended a set of 24 preludes, following the models of J. S. Bach, Chopin, and Debussy. Sadly, we are unlikely ever to know.

The *Second Prelude* provides a slower, more reflective contrast to the faster movements that precede and follow it. Internally, it also reveals an alternation of styles and tempos. The prelude opens with a slow, bluesy, somewhat languorous ostinato unfolding in support of a lone violin with the main tune. Perhaps suggesting reflected light on a rain-dampened city street in the wee hours of the night, this melody features the interval or a rising minor third that falls back on itself. This was one of Gershwin's favorite thematic ideas, one that he used in *The Man I Love*, *Harlem Serenade*, *Concerto in F*, and others. The character of this idea is a central factor in the "jazz/blues" character of the composer's music.

Midway through, a quietly tense chord propels the music into something very different, a rollicking swing-style melody in the low strings accompanied by banjo-like strumming in the upper instruments. It is as if we had opened a door from our quiet city street into a brightly lit party scene, riotous with laughter and dancing. After a short time, though, we find ourselves back out through the door, into a darker, more subdued environment. A final chord unfolds and then dissipates like a wisp of fog.

ABOUT THE COMPOSER



Ben Hawkins retired as Professor Emeritus from Transylvania University in 2024. His 39-year service at Transylvania followed five years of public school teaching in Virginia and Texas. Throughout his career, he has conducted both bands and orchestras, and taught courses in music education, music theory, and conducting, as well as writing for first-year students in the university's liberal arts curriculum. He has guest conducted, adjudicated, and presented in most regions of the United States, as well as in Australia and Mexico. Dr. Hawkins currently serves as Orchestra Editor for RWS Music Company. He and his wife Cyndee, a retired public school band director, have two adult sons, two lovely daughters-in-law, and two perfect grandchildren.

SECOND PRELUDE

Conductor Score
RWS-2687-00

George Gershwin
Trans. by Ben Hawkins (ASCAP)

Andante con moto e poco rubato $\text{♩} = 72$

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Cello

Double Bass

0 L1 L2

1/2 *p*

L1 L2

1/2 *p*

pizz.

p 1 2 3 4 5

Solo *mp*

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Cello

DB

9

III 3

III 1 2 2

III 1 2 3 2 L3

III *mp*

III *mp*

arco

mp

6 7 8 9 10

SECOND PRELUDE

Vln. 1 *mp* *tutti* *Solo* *p*

Vln. 2 *p* -L4 3 L4 3 2 3 L4 2 -1 L2 2 L3 -1

Vla. *p* 0 0 L1 L2 2 3 L4 2

Cello *p* *mp* II

DB *pizz.* *arco*

11 12 13 14 15

Vln. 1 *mp* *tutti*

Vln. 2 *mp* *mp*

Vla. *mp* *mp* 0 L1 L2 0 L1 L2

Cello *mp* -2 4 -1 1 4

DB *mp*

16 17 18 19 20

SECOND PRELUDE

div. $\frac{V}{3}$ **23**

Vln. 1 *mp*

Vln. 2 *mp*

Vla. *mp*

Cello *mp*

DB *mp*

musical notation for measures 21-24

21 22 23 24

27

Vln. 1 Solo

Vln. 2

Vla. *mp*

Cello *mp*

DB *mp*

musical notation for measures 25-28

25 26 27 28

Slightly faster, á la swing

tutti
pizz. (strummed)

31

3 2 4 sim.

p lazily
pizz. (strummed)

p lazily

mf

mf III

pizz.

mf 31

29 I 30

H2 3 H1 2 1 4

sim.

+1 2

2 1 3 0 3 2 1 2 3 2 4

1/2 -1 2 -1 -4 2 1 2 -1 3 0 -1

III I III I II

32 33 34 35

45 **Tempo I**
tutti

Vln. 1 *p*

Vln. 2 *mp* tutti

Vla. *mp* tutti

Cello *p* tutti -1 2 3

DB *p*

45 46 47 48 49

Vln. 1 *mp* div. 3 ord. III 51 unis. -2 -3

Vln. 2 *mp* 3

Vla. *mp* -1 2 -1 2 I3 -L4 3 2 3

Cello

DB

50 51 52 53

SECOND PRELUDE

Solo

Vln. 1 *mf* *f* *f* *sub. p*

Vln. 2 *mf* *f* *f* *sub. p*

Vla. *mf* *f* *sub. p*

Cello *mf* *f* *sub. p* *mp* III

DB *mf* *f* *sub. p*

54 55 56 57

Vln. 1 *pp* *tutti* *pp*

Vln. 2 *pp* *div.* *pp*

Vla. *pp* *div.* *pp*

Cello *pp* *div.* *pp* *sfp*

DB *pp* *II*

60 61