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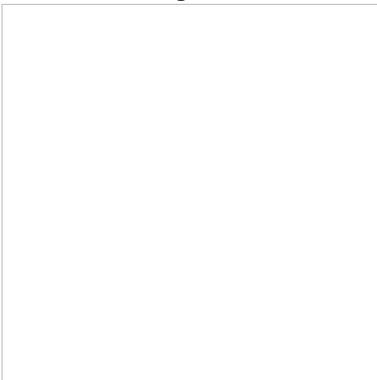
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July 13, 2016



Gershwin: American in Paris -
 Concerto in F
 Harmonie Ensemble / New York,
 Steven Richman, Lincoln Mayorga
 harmonia mundi HMU 907658
Street Date: August 26, 2016



GERSHWIN: AN AMERICAN IN PARIS, CONCERTO IN F, AND TWO RARITIES

**Lincoln Mayorga • Harmonie Ensemble/New York, Steven Richman
 Conducting**

Release Date: August 26 on harmonia mundi

Harmonia Mundi announces the release of an album of some of the best-loved orchestral and piano music of George Gershwin, including two pieces that have not been recorded before.

Working from Gershwin's original manuscripts, **Steven Richman** and the **Harmonie Ensemble/New York** recapture the lean, unsentimental style that Gershwin intended for *An American in Paris* and the *Concerto in F* with piano soloist Lincoln Mayorga. Also included are first recordings of the overture to *Of Thee I Sing* (radio version) and Roy Bargy's orchestration of the *Three Preludes* for piano. Bargy was pianist and arranger for the Paul Whiteman Orchestra, which commissioned and first performed Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*.

Richman has been leading what might be called historically informed performances of Gershwin for nearly three decades. He says that these are the first recordings in many decades of Gershwin's orchestrations before they were edited and re-scored by misdirected publishers and arrangers. "Gershwin's versatility was uniquely American," says Richman. "He was a great genius."

George Gershwin brought jazz into the American concert hall. His popular *An American in Paris*, composed in 1928, was the inspiration for the 1951 film of the same name. This jazzy symphonic poem portrays an American visitor as he strolls about the City of Light, succumbs to a brief spasm of homesickness, then returns to his cheerful wanderings. Gershwin called the score — which includes four actual taxi horns — "a jolly piece" with "nothing solemn about it." Richman's performance on this new recording restores the original saxophone parts and many original Gershwin details, and it is among the swiftest and most captivating on record.

The *Concerto in F* was written in 1925. His first symphonic orchestration, it is an upbeat piece featuring various jazz styles of the period, blues, ragtime, and the Charleston. Richman has gone back to Gershwin's original manuscript and, collaborating here with the brilliant pianist **Lincoln Mayorga**, highlights the syncopated zest, bluesy allure, and New York energy that make the concerto such a fresh creation.

Gershwin's *Three Preludes*, miniatures with bluesy riffs and hints of Brazilian and Spanish flair, have become a beloved part of the classical repertoire. *Of Thee I Sing*, with a book by George S. Kaufman and lyrics by Ira Gershwin, was the first musical to win the Pulitzer Prize for drama.

Mr. Richman founded the Grammy-nominated Harmonie Ensemble/New York in 1979. The Ensemble's wide-ranging repertoire includes music for orchestra, spirituals, and works for wind and chamber ensembles. The Ensemble also specializes in symphonic jazz, and its recordings include *Henry Mancini: Music for Peter Gunn* and *Gershwin by Grofé* (both available on Harmonia Mundi) with pianist Lincoln Mayorga.

Henry Mancini: Music for Peter Gunn was named a Recording of the Month by *Stereophile* magazine, which called it "electrifying... gorgeous... Déjà vu in a wild adrenalin rush." Andrew McGregor of BBC Radio 3 said that *Gershwin by Grofé* was "raw, brash, swung with relish... remarkable playing." *Gramophone* magazine's Donald Rosenberg called the disc "a burst of Gershwin imagination in which Richman and company nail the style."

Harmonie Ensemble/New York has performed throughout the U.S., as well as on radio and international television. It has given the premieres — U.S., New York, world, and recorded — of works by Handel, Stravinsky, Shostakovich, Brahms, Dvořák, Copland, Gershwin, Mussorgsky, Ferde Grofé, Franz Krommer, and Nino Rota. Performances by the Ensemble under the baton of Steven Richman have attracted record-breaking audiences in sold-out halls in Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall. Harmonie Ensemble/New York presented, at Lincoln Center, the first performances in over 50 years of Gershwin's original symphonic orchestrations. The Ensemble's Copland CD was featured on PBS-TV in Ken Burns's 2009 film *The National Parks*.

Versatile pianist Lincoln Mayorga has performed in more than 200 cities in North America and made extensive tours of Europe. Ronald E. Grames of *Fanfare* magazine calls Mayorga "a splendid pianist with impeccable jazz and symphonic credentials." ConcertoNet.com called *Gershwin by Grofé* "an absolute 'must have!'" and that Mayorga plays "with all of the verve and panache the concerto requires." John Quinn of Music Web International UK (which named *Gershwin by Grofé* a Recording of the Month), said that "*Lincoln Mayorga is a superb, dashing soloist.*"