

Gershwin. with Strings



Magnus Hjorth Trio

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Born in the late 19th century into a family of Russian immigrants, George Gershwin began composing at an early age. He wrote his first hit – “Swanee”, made famous by Al Johnson – at the age of 17, the same year his first musical show opened. Unforgettable compositions and musicals continued to flow from the hand of this genius until his early death in 1937. Although Gershwin died at 38, he published app. 700 songs, many of which are foremost in the Great American Songbook. He had an uncanny talent for combining jazz rhythms with elements from classical music in an original and unique marriage between the genres.

Gershwin’s best-known themes are among the most durable tunes in the vocal and instrumental repertoire of jazz. Staples among standards, they still serve as inspiration for jazz musicians and vocalists. Almost every jazz musician has utilized these wonderful chord progressions with their seemingly never-ending harmonic possibilities as locomotives for improvisation and interpretation. In fact, our familiarity with each composition is instrumental in helping us judge a player’s originality and ability.

Magnus Hjorth is Swedish, but he lives in Denmark. His repertoire has included several Gershwin tunes for quite a while. However, he has also known for a long time that someday he would have to record a whole album dedicated to Gershwin’s music - and write the string arrangements for the album.

GERSHWIN WITH STRINGS is Hjorth’s fifth CD. The previous are: LOCOMOTIF (Calibrated, 2007), OLD NEW BORROWED BLUE (Stunt, 2009), LIVE IN JAPAN (Cloud Records, Japan 2010) and PLASTIC MOON (Stunt 2011).

Dressed in velvety strings, the Scandinavian trio – Magnus Hjorth, piano; Petter Eldh, bass and Snorre Kirk, drums – delves deep into Gershwin’s musical world, interpreting classics like “Swanee”, “I Got Rhythm” and “It Ain’t Necessarily So”, as well as lesser known tunes from Gershwin’s pen. Their focus is on the great melodies and soft-spoken mood, but the swing factor is most definitely there. This mature and refined album marks a new and exciting direction for the trio, and confirms Magnus Hjorth’s status as one of Scandinavia’s brightest piano talents. He combines tradition and swinging modernism with elegant and sophisticated style.

Magnus Hjorth (1983) comes from the small Swedish town Laholm. He started out on violin and trombone, but things really began to fall into place for him when he began playing piano at the age of 12. After graduating from Copenhagen’s Rhythmic Conservatory, he has made his home in the Danish capitol with its vibrant music scene and central position in Europe. He is a very active and popular musician, performing in many constellations and as an accompanist for musicians and vocalists from abroad. He has toured in Europe, USA - and especially in Japan, where he is a popular attraction.

Bess, You Is My Woman Now / I Got Rhythm / It Ain’t Necessarily So / Someone To Watch Over Me / My Man’s Gone Now / Swanee / Fascinating Rhythm / They Can’t Take That Away From Me / Nice Work If Yo Can Get It.

Magnus Hjorth (p), Petter Eldh (b), Snorre Kirk (dr) + Annasara Lundgren & Tove Wadenius (violin), Daniel Eklund (viola) and Karin Vettefors (cello)

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