

RWS SYMPHONY BAND SERIES

Grade: 5

Conductor Score: RWS-2554-01

First Prelude

George Gershwin

Transcribed by
Ben Hawkins

Review Only
Requires Purchase

RWS

Symphony Band Series

RWS MUSIC
COMPANY

First Prelude

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INSTRUMENTATION

Conductor Score	1	F Horn 1-2.....	2
Piccolo	1	F Horn 3-4.....	2
Flute 1-2.....	8	Trombone 1.....	2
Oboe 1-2.....	2	Trombone 2.....	2
B ^b Clarinet 1	4	Bass Trombone	2
B ^b Clarinet 2-3	8	Euphonium B.C.	2
B ^b Bass Clarinet.....	2	Euphonium T.C.....	2
Bassoon 1-2.....	2	Tuba	4
E ^b Alto Saxophone 1	3	Mallet Percussion: Xylophone, Bells	2
E ^b Alto Saxophone 2.....	3	Timpani	1
B ^b Tenor Saxophone	2	Percussion 1: Hi-Hat, Snare Drum, Bass Drum (or Drum Set)...	3
E ^b Baritone Saxophone	1	Percussion 2: Bongos	1
B ^b Trumpet 1	3	Percussion 3: Guiro, Crash Cymbals.....	2
B ^b Trumpet 2	3		
B ^b Trumpet 3	3		

PROGRAM NOTE

The Piano Preludes of George Gershwin occupy a unique and fascinating space in the history of American Music. Soon after Gershwin's triumphant introduction of *Rhapsody in Blue* in 1924, he began composing short pieces for solo piano. Some scholars believe that the composer intended to produce a set of 24 preludes, potentially raising an intriguing parallel with J. S. Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*. Perhaps a more likely model for Gershwin was the *24 Preludes* by Claude Debussy. Debussy's harmonic and coloristic propensities certainly have much in common with Gershwin's body of work.

In large part due to his untimely death at age 38, we are unlikely ever to know just what Gershwin intended. He left us seven preludes in some stage of development. The composer performed various combinations of these in informal settings, but the first major public exposure of this music was in the form of the *Three Preludes* premiered at the Roosevelt Hotel in New York City in December, 1926, with the composer at the Piano.

The brief (slightly more than a minute) **First Prelude** begins with a slow, ruminative statement of a short motive suggestive of the blues scale. Immediately, the piece explodes into an exuberant dance reminiscent of the Brazilian samba style. The samba would not become widely popular in the US for another thirty years or so, but clearly, Gershwin was widely conversant with indigenous styles from other lands as well as those of North America.

The listener has barely caught a breath before the ensemble romp that is **First Prelude** ends in a dizzying flourish.

NOTES TO CONDUCTOR

The Trumpet solo in the first two bars should be performed as if the player were experimenting with solo ideas for an improvisation. Encourage them to take their time. The wah-wah effect should be really "sultry." (Depending on your personnel, you might want to try the opening solo on Alto Sax, with "smears.")

The Allegro ben ritmo e deciso begins in earnest at measure 3, and should hold steady until the last beat of the piece. A tight groove is an absolute necessity in order to realize the potential of the **First Prelude**.

Gershwin's metronome marking is quarter note = 100. His recorded performance, easily available on YouTube and highly recommended, largely adheres to that. A band is not a Piano, however, and I believe that the slower tempo indicated in this arrangement allows the music to "breathe" in this large ensemble setting while still allowing forward momentum to be maintained.

I believe that while this music must be played with great rhythmic discipline, the best performances will display a quality of ease and élan. When a section or soloist has the tune, they should "show off" a bit, in keeping with the traditions of jazz band members taking up the lead in their respective turns.

Enjoy this small taste of the "Roaring 20s." Please visit my composer page at rwsmusic.com to connect! *Ben Hawkins*

ABOUT THE ARRANGER



Ben Hawkins is Professor of Music and Director of Instrumental Ensembles at Transylvania University in Lexington, KY, where he has taught since 1985. At Transylvania, Dr. Hawkins conducts the Concert Band, Chamber Orchestra, Pep Band, and teaches courses in music theory, music education, and conducting. For eighteen years, he served as Program Director in Music. In addition, he has regularly taught in the Transylvania's unique First Year Studies program, a foundational reading/writing/critical thinking course which the university requires of all students. Dr. Hawkins holds Transylvania's Bingham Fellowship in Teaching Excellence. He serves as Music Director of the Central Kentucky Concert Band, a community band entering its 48th year of existence.

Prior to his tenure at Transylvania, Dr. Hawkins taught five years of band in grades 5-12 in Virginia and Texas. His arrangements have been performed by the United States Air Force Band and by numerous university and high school bands. He has served as a guest conductor, adjudicator, and clinician throughout the United States, as well as in Mexico and Australia. Ben lives in Lexington with Cyndee, his wife of 41 years and a retired band director. They have two adult sons, Jay and Turner.



FIRST PRELUDE

RWS-2554-00

Allegro ben ritmo e deciso $\text{♩} = 84$

3

George Gershwin (ASCAP)
Trans. by Ben Hawkins (ASCAP)

Piccolo

Flute 1-2

Oboe 1-2

B^b Clarinet 1

B^b Clarinet 2-3

B^b Bass Clarinet

Bassoon 1-2

E^b Alto Saxophone 1

E^b Alto Saxophone 2

B^b Tenor Saxophone

E^b Baritone Saxophone

B^b Trumpet 1

B^b Trumpet 2

B^b Trumpet 3

F Horn 1-2

F Horn 3-4

Trombone 1

Trombone 2

Bass Trombone

Euphonium B.C.

Tuba

Mallet Percussion
Xylophone
Bells

Timpani
F, A, C, F

Percussion 1
Hi-Hat
Snare Drum
Bass Drum
(or Drum Set)

Percussion 2
Bongos

Percussion 3
Guero
Crash Cymbals

Allegro ben ritmo e deciso ♩ = 84

Solo "vavava" (stem in) (ad lib)

Tutti, open staccato

3

Hi-Hat

B.D.

f

Guero

A A sim.

FIRST PRELUDE

Picc. *f*

Fl. 1-2 *f*

Ob. 1-2 *f*

Clar. 1 *Solo* *f* *Tutti*

Clar. 2-3 *f*

B. Cl. *mf*

Bsn. 1-2 *mf*

A. Sax 1 *mf*

A. Sax 2 *mf*

T. Sax *mf*

B. Sax *mf*

Trpt. 1

Trpt. 2

Trpt. 3

F Hn. 1-2 *mf*

F Hn. 3-4 *mf*

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

B. Tbn.

Euph. B.C. *mf*

Tuba *mf*

Mlt. *Xylophone* *f*

Timp.

Perc. 1 *p*

Perc. 2

Perc. 3 *mf*

7 8 9 10 11 12

- 5 -

Picc. *p* *mf*

Fl. 1-2 *p* *mf*

Ob. 1-2 *p* *mf*

Clar. 1 *p* *mf*

Clar. 2-3 *f* *p* *mf*

B. Cl. *f* *p* *mf*

Bsn. 1-2 *f* *p* *mf*

A. Sax 1 *p* *mf*

A. Sax 2 *p* *mf*

T. Sax *f* *Play* *p* *mf*

B. Sax *f* *p* *mf*

Trpt. 1 *mp* *mf*

Trpt. 2 *mf*

Trpt. 3 *mf*

F. Hn. 1-2 *f* *mf*

F. Hn. 3-4 *f* *mf*

Tbn. 1 *mf*

Tbn. 2 *mf*

B. Tbn. *mf*

Euph. B.C. *f* *p* *mf*

Tuba *f* *p* *mf* *Bells*

Mlt. *p* *mf*

Timp.

Perc. 1 *f* *mf*

Perc. 2 *f* *mf*

Perc. 3 *f* *mf*

19 20 21 22 23 24

25

Picc.

Fl. 1-2

Ob. 1-2

Clar. 1

Clar. 2-3

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1-2

A. Sax 1

A. Sax 2

T. Sax

B. Sax

Cue: F Hns

Play

p *f* *p* *mf* *mp*

25

Trpt. 1

Trpt. 2

Trpt. 3

F Hn. 1-2

F Hn. 3-4

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

B. Tbn.

Euph. B.C.

Tuba

Mlt.

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

pp *f* *mf* *p* *f* *mf* *p*

25 26 27 28 29 30 31

- 7 -

32

Trpt. 1

Trpt. 2

Trpt. 3

F Hn. 1-2

F Hn. 3-4

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

B. Tbn.

Euph. B.C.

Tuba

Mlt.

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

32 33 34 35 36 37

42

Picc.

Fl. 1-2

Ob. 1-2

Clar. 1

Clar. 2-3

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1-2

A. Sax 1

A. Sax 2

T. Sax

B. Sax

Trpt. 1

Trpt. 2

Trpt. 3

F Hn. 1-2

F Hn. 3-4

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

B. Tbn.

Euph. B.C.

Tuba

Mlt.

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

42

(half valve)

Bells

Nylo

to Cr. Cym.

38 39 40 41 42 43

Picc. *f* *mf*

Fl. 1-2 *mf*

Ob. 1-2 *f*

Clar. 1 *mf*

Clar. 2-3 *mf*

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1-2

A. Sax 1 *mf*

A. Sax 2 *mf*

T. Sax *mf*

B. Sax *mf*

Trpt. 1 *mf*

Trpt. 2 *mf*

Trpt. 3 *mf*

F Hn. 1-2 *mf*

F Hn. 3-4 *mf*

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

B. Tbn.

Euph. B.C. *mf*

Tuba *mf*

Mlt. *mf*

Timp. *mf* *p*

Perc. 1 *p*

Perc. 2

Perc. 3 *Ct. Cym.* *p* *mp* *mf* *f*

44 45 46 47 48 49

50

Picc. *ff*

Fl. 1-2 *ff*

Ob. 1-2 *ff*

Clar. 1 *ff*

Clar. 2-3 *ff*

B. Cl. *ff*

Bsn. 1-2 *ff*

A. Sax 1 *ff*

A. Sax 2 *ff*

T. Sax *ff*

B. Sax *ff*

50

Trpt. 1 *ff*

Trpt. 2 *ff*

Trpt. 3 *ff*

F Hn. 1-2 *ff*

F Hn. 3-4 *ff*

Tbn. 1 *ff*

Tbn. 2 *ff*

B. Tbn. *ff*

Euph. B.C. *ff*

Tuba *ff*

Mlt. *ff*

Timp. *ff*

Perc. 1 *f*

Perc. 2 *f*

Perc. 3 *ff*

to Guiro

Guio

50 51 52 53 54 55

FIRST PRELUDE

Picc.

Fl. 1-2

Ob. 1-2

Clar. 1

Clar. 2-3

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1-2

A. Sax 1

A. Sax 2

T. Sax

B. Sax

Trpt. 1

Trpt. 2

Trpt. 3

F Hn. 1-2

F Hn. 3-4

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

B. Tbn.

Euph. B.C.

Tuba

Mlt.

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

56 57 58 59 60 61 62

- 12 -