

RHAPSODY

IN BLUE

100 AN

GERSHWIN

1942 VERSION

**PAUL LAY TRIO
& ORCHESTRE**

1924 – 2024 : 100 ANS DE LA RHAPSODY IN BLUE

On the occasion of the centenary of the creation of Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue in 2024, Paul Lay explores the many facets of this groundbreaking work. By combining a symphony orchestra with his jazz trio, Paul proposes his own reinterpretation of the 1942 version, enriched with three additional works by Gershwin, arranged and orchestrated for this specific instrumentation (Summertime, Nice Work If You Can Get It, It Ain't Necessarily So).

When George Gershwin composed Rhapsody in Blue, he became the first composer to combine jazz and classical music within an unprecedented concert work. By drawing on the sounds and rhythms of the jazz bands of the 1920s and incorporating them into his writing, he broke down the barriers between jazz music and the symphonic tradition. The premiere took place on February 12, 1924, at Aeolian Hall in New York, conducted by Paul Whiteman, with George Gershwin himself at the piano.

This first version of the work reveals the composer's ambition: to transpose the spirit of jazz into his compositional language and elevate it to the status of "serious music," much as Maurice Ravel—friend and great admirer of Gershwin—would later do in several of his own compositions. Nevertheless, Gershwin's music remains distinctly American, through its unique sound world and its desire to merge the most distant cultural traditions.

Ferde Grofé arranged three versions of Rhapsody in Blue for the composer. The 1924 version gives prominence to brass and percussion. A second version followed in 1926, and a third in 1942—the latter having become, in a sense, the definitive version.

Premiered in November 2024 with the Strasbourg Philharmonic Orchestra (co-produced with Jazzdor), the programme is revived in December in Avignon with the Orchestre Régional Avignon-Provence, and in January 2025 at La Folle Journée de Nantes with Sinfonia Varsovia. It also exists in solo and trio versions.



BOOKING ET MANAGEMENT

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