

A Nice Boy From Brooklyn: Michael Dulin Plays Gershwin
Michael Dulin
2004/1999 / Equity Digital
61'49"

Equity Digital is rereleasing pianist Michael Dulin's two earlier classical recordings at the same time as his newest release, "Timeless: Classics for a New Age" (October 19, 2004). Originally released in 1999, "A Nice Boy From Brooklyn" is comprised of "The Gershwin Songbook," Six Preludes, and eight Improvisations that were never written down by Gershwin himself, but were transcribed from live radio broadcasts from 1926 and 1928 by Artis Wodehouse. Dulin's mastery of the piano makes all thirty-two tracks seem effortless and showcase his brilliant virtuosity as well as his amazing versatility. A world-class pianist with a long career in classical music, Dulin makes all of these pieces his own, giving them a sparkling freshness and a feeling of spontaneity. He added some of his own embellishments to the improvisations, but otherwise, remains faithful to Gershwin's original scores.

The extensive liner notes, also written by Dulin, give insight into Gershwin's personality with quotations from other artists and people who knew Gershwin, and then gives a history of many of the selections. "The Gershwin Songbook" was originally published in 1932, and is made up of eighteen variations and arrangements of songs that Gershwin used to entertain his friends in the intimacy of living room settings. Many of Gershwin's most famous and popular songs are included such as "The Man I Love," "Swanee," "Fascinating Rhythm," "Lady Be Good," "'S Wonderful," and "I Got Rhythm." The variety of styles is amazing - from bluesy ballads to full-tilt finger-flying jazz. Dulin's emotional range and tonal colorations are remarkable. The Six Preludes are quite short, and Dulin calls the first three "his most perfect compositions." Of the six, I especially like "Blue Lullaby," a dark, slinky little piece. Some of the eight Improvisations are variations or arrangements of pieces from the songbook, so it is fascinating to see what Gershwin (and Dulin!) did to flesh them out. Again, Dulin's playing is fresh and flawless. Some of the titles in this section of the recording are "Clap Yo' Hands," "Someone to Watch Over Me," "Sweet and Low Down," and "'S Wonderful/Funny Face."

If you are new to Gershwin's music, "A Nice Boy From Brooklyn" is an absolute must-have. If you know all of Gershwin's music, this is also a must-have to hear the

music as it was composed and interpreted by the composer himself. So much of Gershwin's music has been performed and recorded over the years, and most of it is improvised and arranged by the various musicians who play it, so it's refreshing as well as informative to hear the "real deal" - or, at the very least, how the music began and evolved during Gershwin's life. I give "A Nice Boy From Brooklyn" my highest recommendation. It will be available from www.michaeldulin.com (samples are there now), amazon.com, and cdbaby.com. Great stuff!

Kathy Parsons