



LUCAS DEBARGUE
Gershwin Album - Review

Clive Paget - 11.09.2026

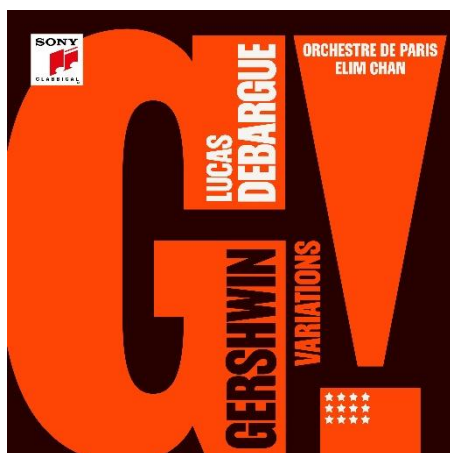


Lucas Debargue: Gershwin Variations album review – freshness and flair



Alongside supple and distinctive accounts of Rhapsody in Blue and the Piano Concerto and Preludes, the French pianist showcases his jazz chops in reinterpretations of Gershwin's timeless songs

Ever since Lucas Debargue took fourth prize at the 2015 international Tchaikovsky competition, he's refused to be pigeonholed. His distinctive journey brings him now to George Gershwin, complementing the piano concerto and preludes with beguiling original explorations of the composer's songs in the form of a dozen études. His supple account of Rhapsody in Blue is based on Gershwin's solo piano arrangement, to which he adds his own partly improvised cadenzas. Like everything here, it comes up fresh as a daisy.



The Piano Concerto in F brings Debargue's jazz credentials to the fore (he cut his teeth on the club circuit). The Orchestre de Paris under Elim Chan provides an admirably clear and concise accompaniment. The edge-of-your-seat stakes are reminiscent of André Previn.

In his programme note, Debargue admires Gershwin as a maverick whose music transcends time and place. His 12 virtuoso études on Gershwin songs, impeccable compositions in their own right, view familiar tunes through unfamiliar lenses. Embraceable You, for example, is reinvented as a sultry rumba, while Fascinating Rhythm is a cheeky Parisian waltz. It Ain't Necessarily So barnstorms as a Bach-flavoured Fantasia, Chaconne and Fugue. The colossal 12th étude comprises 20 whirlwind variations on Summertime. Performances are rhythmically alert and full of imaginative flair.

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