

Dr. Alicia Zizzo

Pianist and Musicologist

Biographical Sketch

As one of America's most remarkable classical musicians and scholars, Dr. Alicia Zizzo's pianistic artistry has brought her international acclaim on four continents, from London (The Barbican Center), Amsterdam (The Concertgebouw), Vienna (The Musikverein), Budapest (The Vigado, with The Budapest Symphony), Warsaw (The Ostrovsky Palace for the Chopin Society) to New York (Avery Fisher and Carnegie Halls) as well as many European venues and throughout the U.S. Het Vaderland in Amsterdam wrote, "As a pianist, she is second to none." She has presented solo and lecture/recitals and been invited to participate in symposiums and conferences at major American universities, including Berklee College of Music in Boston, New York's Hofstra University and New York University. She is a Steinway Artist (<http://www.steinway.com/>) and her portrait hangs on their Hall of Fame in New York City.

Dr. Zizzo's musicological scholarship has been focused primarily on the research and restoration of the classical piano literature of George Gershwin. Specifically, Alicia Zizzo's goal has been to enhance his remarkably small classical piano solo repertoire. Working with the Library of Congress, Warner Bros. Publications, the Gershwin estate and late Gershwin scholar Edward Jablonski, she has researched, transcribed and reconstructed the composer's lost or forgotten classical solo piano manuscripts notated in his own hand. She approaches Gershwin's manuscripts not with the objective of making yet another arrangement of his melodies as so many musicians have already done, but rather to literally reconstruct from fragments, sketches and partially completed scores Gershwin's own long neglected material.

Warner Bros. Publications, which administers all copyrights to Gershwin's material, made Dr. Zizzo's reconstructions of **Lullaby**, **Blue Monday**, **The Complete Seven Preludes**, the **Annotated Rhapsody in Blue**, a piano suite from **Shall We Dance**, **The I Got Rhythm Variations** for piano solo, **Gershwin Miniatures** and other unpublished manuscripts for solo-piano the first new authentic editions of Gershwin classical material to be published in more than half a century. Many of these editions are now available through Alfred Publishing - <http://www.alfred.com/alfredweb/front/SearchResult.aspx?keywords=zizzo>.

Her work has been hailed in dozens of magazines and newspapers throughout the world, ranging from **The New York Times**, **Washington Post**, **Chicago Sun-Times** and **Boston Globe** to Canada's **Toronto Star**, to Tokyo's **Asahi Shimbun** to Taiwan's **China Post** to London's **Gramophone** and **Classic FM Magazine** to the Netherlands' **NRC Handelsblad** to Bogota's **El Espectador**. Her groundbreaking musicological analysis of the original manuscripts of the **Rhapsody in Blue** was published internationally in **Clavier** magazine. She has also written about Gershwin's "lost" Preludes for this magazine and others, including **Piano & Keyboard**, **Piano Today** and **The New York Concert Review**.

Dr. Zizzo has appeared on NBC's Today Show, ABC's Evening News, the BBC World Service, WLIW TV (PBS New York), BBC Radio Four, CNN, the Voice of America, National Public Radio in Washington, Boston and New York, KKGQ-San Francisco, WGBH-Boston, Canada's CBC and Radio France (both the France Musique and Musique Lundi programs). She also appeared and performed in a major National Public Radio documentary celebrating Gershwin's 100th Birthday. She has also participated in film documentaries about Gershwin for the noted French filmmaker Alain Resnais, as well as for the BBC Wales, the latter of which was filmed at the Library of Congress.

Her latest CD project on the Musicians Showcase Recordings Classics label – **George Gershwin, The Original Manuscripts** (<http://www.msacd.com/1127/1127.html>), features reissues of her **Rhapsody in**

Blue, The Complete Seven Preludes, Seven Unpublished Songs and Blue Monday – all for solo piano. **Piano Dreams** has also been issued on MSR (MS1053) and was used in the soundtrack of a new film produced in Canada. She is currently working on a new CD, **Rhythm and Hues**, which will include Gershwin's piano suite from **Shall We Dance, The I Got Rhythm Variations** for piano solo and other unpublished manuscripts for solo-piano, as well as **The Complete Seven Preludes** counterpointed with selected Chopin Preludes.

Dr. Zizzo has also recorded these discoveries and reconstructions for MSR Piano Disc.

Dr. Zizzo's landmark, best-selling CDs **Gershwin Rediscovered** (1996 Carlton Classics) and **Gershwin Rediscovered, Volume II** (1998 Carlton Classics) featured her superbly idiomatic performances of these lost manuscripts, including the completely restored **Rhapsody in Blue** (both the solo piano and orchestral versions), **Concerto in F, Seven Preludes, Blue Monday, Lullaby** and a series of lovely miniatures, including **Sleepless Night**. These performances added to the recorded repertoire her major discoveries on Gershwin's music.

Classic CD called the Carlton Classics CDs "undoubtedly fascinating releases" and also said "...anyone listening to Zizzo's performance of Rhapsody in Blue, based directly on the composer's manuscript, is bound to notice some striking differences...The inclusion of extra transitional material...certainly serves to strengthen the structural coherence of the whole work".

London's **Classic FM** magazine has written, "There's plenty of excitement...in **Gershwin Rediscovered**...scintillatingly played by Zizzo from the manuscript Gershwin used in his own performances. The piece emerges as much wittier and more intricate than the published version we usually hear." **Gramophone** magazine has said, "Future Gershwin pianists will need to come to terms with Zizzo's discoveries...really charming discoveries."

Stuart Isacoff, editor in chief of **Piano Today** magazine wrote that Dr. Zizzo's performance of the **Rhapsody in Blue** was "the best (I) have ever heard." Gershwin biographer Edward Jablonski wrote, "the playing (is) absolutely exquisite."

In a four-day celebration of the Gershwin Centennial in 1998, an impressive roster of the most renowned Gershwin scholars and musicians were invited to make presentations at the Coolidge Auditorium of the Library of Congress in Washington, DC. Among them were Michael Feinstein, Michael Tilson Thomas, Anne Wiggins Brown (the original "Bess" in "Porgy & Bess") and Edward Jablonski. Alicia Zizzo was honored to be the only concert pianist invited to present a full recital and lecture at this historic event. She performed her Gershwin/Zizzo publications and received the highest laudatory praise.

Along with Honorees George Bush and Billy Joel, Alicia Zizzo was awarded an Honorary Doctorate degree by Hofstra University in 1998 in recognition of her important contributions to American music. In 2004, Dr. Zizzo was honored with an International Prize for her work by the President of the Greek Parliament, through the auspices of the Euro-American Women's Council. Dr. Zizzo is now also Dame Alicia Zizzo, having been knighted by the Russian Royal Ancestry dating from the 18th Century. In December 2005, her biography and a special citation for her contributions to American music history were read into the Congressional Record of the 109th United States Congress.

In April 2002, Hofstra University hosted **I Hear A Rhapsody: The Classical Music of George Gershwin**, a one-day symposium that featured an international group of Gershwin performers and scholars, including Gershwin biographer Edward Jablonski, Wayne Shirley of the music division of the Library of Congress, and Stuart Isacoff.

Her webpage is at <http://www.jamesarts.com/zizzo.gershwin.htm>. You can read several of her important articles about Gershwin's music online at http://www.jamesarts.com/releases/march03/AZ_030303.htm, http://www.jamesarts.com/releases/nov02/AZ_112602.htm, <http://www.jamesarts.com/AZRHAPNOTE.htm> and <http://www.jamesarts.com/AZCLAVPREL.htm>.

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4/2009

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Short Bio

Dr. Alicia Zizzo's editions of George Gershwin's **Lullaby**, **Blue Monday**, **The Complete Seven Preludes**, the **Annotated Rhapsody in Blue**, **The I Got Rhythm Variations** for piano solo, **Gershwin Miniatures** and the piano suite from **Shall We Dance** were originally published by Warner Bros. Publishing and are now available through Alfred Publishing. Her **Gershwin Rediscovered** Volumes I and II CDs were issued by Carlton Classics and contained premiere recordings of these newly published editions. Several of these recordings have been reissued and/or re-recorded for MSR labels. These editions and discoveries have been featured in broadcast and print media throughout North and South America, Europe and Asia. Dr. Zizzo has performed throughout North America and Europe and is a Steinway Artist. Alicia Zizzo has been awarded an Honorary Doctorate by Hofstra University in recognition of her contributions to American music. She was also honored with an International Prize for her work by the President of the Greek Parliament, through the auspices of the Euro-American Women's Council. In 1998, she was the only concert pianist asked to perform and speak at the Library of Congress' four-day Gershwin Centennial celebration. Her webpage is at <http://www.jamesarts.com/zizzo.gershwin.htm>. She can also be contacted through Jeffrey James Arts Consulting - 516-586-3433 - phone & fax or at jamesarts@worldnet.att.net.