

Listening Guide

Gershwin: Piano Prelude No. 1

DATE OF WORK: Published 1927 (in set of Three Preludes)

FORM: Loose ternary (**A-B-A'**)

TEMPO: Allegro ben ritmato e deciso (Fast, rhythmic, and decisive)

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR: Energetic, syncopated first theme, with expressive blue note.
Highly rhythmic and accented accompaniment.
Overall 3-part structure (**A-B-A'**).
Sweeping high-range lines build to climax in last section.

A section

Short, free introduction; slowing, then main theme, with lowered 7th-scale degree.

Quick tempo set with syncopated chords and offbeats.

Theme 1 accented and syncopated:



B section

Begins softly with theme that rises a 4th (or sometimes a 5th), followed by repeated pitches over syncopated accompaniment:



Development of B theme, leads back to A.

A' section

Return of opening theme, with variations; final glissando to closing chord.