

# CHANDOS

**NEW RELEASE**

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**Tribute to Earl Wild (1915-2010)**

**Gershwin/Wild: Seven Virtuoso Études (1976)**

**Gershwin/Wild: Grand Fantasy on 'Porgy and Bess' (1976)**

**Gershwin/Wild: Improvisations on 'Someone to Watch over Me' (1990)**

**Earl Wild: Piano Sonata (2000)**

**Xiayin Wang (piano)**

**CHAN 10626**

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Earl Wild, the legendary piano virtuoso, who died on 23 January 2010 aged ninety-four, was fondly known as the Peter Pan of pianists on account of his perennial youthfulness and stamina when tackling the great romantic blockbuster concertos that formed the centrepiece of his repertoire. Throughout his life, Wild composed a large quantity of music, from television scores to ballet music, but mainly piano transcriptions of other composers' works, which he imbued with his own distinct voice. Famous for a unique style that encompassed many influences, both classical and popular, he will be remembered as one of the great interpreters of Liszt, Rachmaninoff, and, perhaps most significantly, George Gershwin.

This CD comprises Earl Wild's arrangements of well-known Gershwin tunes, as well as the Piano Sonata, an original composition from 2000, which carries strong imprints of jazz, blues, rag, and American folk music, while still remaining firmly rooted in the classical form. Wild's *Grand Fantasy on 'Porgy and Bess'* explores well-known songs presented in a free-flowing way that ultimately produces the feel of a single work. Simply to list the songs as they are heard would be misleading, as they drift in and out, receiving different treatments. For example, phrases from 'Summertime' are used throughout the piece in transitions from one section to another, and 'I got plenty o' nuttin'' is presented as a complex and lively march while 'There's a boat dat's leavin' soon for New York' brings the work to a flashing conclusion.

In contrast to the *Grand Fantasy*, which uses several of Gershwin's melodies within one single span, the *Seven Virtuoso Études* does exactly the opposite. Here seven Gershwin songs are treated separately, each showcasing challenging piano techniques and thus placing great virtuosic demands on the performer. 'The man I love' makes extensive use of difficult polyrhythm, and demanding scales and arpeggios govern 'Embraceable you' while 'Somebody loves me' uses legato to evoke a colourful but dreamy mood.

The works on this disc are performed by the young American pianist Xiayin Wang who with her consummate technical brilliance and fine musicianship has already achieved a high level of recognition for her commanding performances in such venues as New York's Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center. Very active on the concert platform, she was the featured performer at the conference of the League of American Orchestras in June.