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Gibbons' Love Of Gershwin Paves Way For Piano Series

HIS MASTER'S VOICE: In strictly classical circles, British pianist **Jack Gibbons** has quite a reputation, especially in his interpretations of **Alkan**, the composer of difficult piano pieces.

Among classical enthusiasts who have a broader view of music and those who take their show tune writers seriously, Gibbons has another side to his skills, one that sometimes surprises him.

Gibbons is at this point an enthusiast strictly for one pop-song composer, and that talent is **George Gershwin**, whose centennial is about to be celebrated (he was born Sept. 26, 1898).

In the early '90s, Gibbons, now in the U.S. for several appearances, including stops in New York; Worcester, Mass.; and Dallas, started a series of Gershwin piano solo albums for the U.K.'s ASV Records, distributed in the U.S. by Koch International. When Gibbons started the project, he didn't think

it would become part of a series, but, as he puts it, "The more I worked on the first album, the more I collected."

There have been three so far, and a fourth is ready for release in the U.S. Noted for his retrieval of original Gershwin transcriptions, Gibbons admits to being "not a lot familiar" with other great pop songwriters. "The thing I love about Gershwin is his interest in classical music as well as his being a great pianist. All the others I find frustrating. They weren't really great pianists. He was quite an intellectual composer. He's a kind of religion to me."

Gibbons particularly savors the the **Fred Astaire**/Gershwin recordings of the '20s. "It couldn't have been easy for Astaire. As his accompanist, Gershwin didn't make any concessions."

Gibbons' love of Gershwin also elicits another benefit: "He did me a great favor by loosening me up."

Actually, Gibbons may have gotten a deeper taste of the show music masters while in New York. He stayed at the apartment of musical theater chronicler **Edward Jablonski**, biographer of Gershwin and **Harold Arlen**, among others.

HISTORY IN THE REMAKING: Historical subjects don't always make for successful musicals, but there are treasures aplenty in three reissues from RCA Victor due Nov. 11. Surely with cult status is "The Golden Apple," a moderately successful 1954 musical that retold Homer's "Odyssey" and "Iliad" in terms of early 20th century America. Its stunning score, by **Jerome Morris** (music) and **John Latouche** (lyrics), includes the standard "Lazy Afternoon." The cast album has an interesting history. It was first released on RCA Victor and then became part of the Elektra catalog before returning to RCA Victor. Good things are also present in "Goodtime Charley," a 1975 show with a score by **Larry Grossman** and **Hal Hackaday** that starred **Joel Grey** as Eng-

land's **King Charles** for 104 performances. The following year **Richard Rodgers** had one of his biggest failures (49 performances) with

"Rex," a collaboration with **Sheldon Harnick** about **Henry VIII** and his ill-fated wives. Nevertheless, that teaming produced some lovely songs, chief among them "Away From You."

LOVE, LAUGHTER & CHEERS: Love songs, comedy songs, show-stoppers—that's the musical comedy way. Warner Bros. Publications has just issued four folios under the theme of "The Glory Of Broadway" (\$18.95 each), all with dozens of songs to soothe you or make you sigh, smile, or stand up and cheer. The titles are "Lasting Love Songs," "Comedy Classics," "Show-stoppers Forever," and "Songs Of Joy And Inspiration."

PRINT ON PRINT: The following are the best-selling folios from Music Sales:

1. "Bob Dylan's Greatest Hits Complete."
2. **Tori Amos**, "Boys For Pele."
3. **Tom Waits**, "Beautiful Maladies."
4. "Paul Simon Complete."
5. **Stone Temple Pilots**, "Tiny Music ... Songs From The Vatican Gift Shop."

Words & Music



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