

Selections by **KAPUSTIN** with a hint of **GERSHWIN** and originals by **CRESPO**

obsessive *play*

DANIEL CRESPO piano

I hope this album brings you joy and that you hear something fun you haven't encountered before. I love to discover innovative ways of playing the piano, always looking for new phrasing, textures, emotions, and anything else a composition has to offer.

Follow along with my included notes to learn why I love Nikolai Kapustin's music so much.

Performing alternate versions

The jazzy nature of the music on this album has compelled me to explore the music in an improvisational way. There is no such thing as a single definitive performance of a composition, which is why I recorded alternate versions of most of the pieces.

These alternate versions feature various degrees of experimentation, sometimes just with an excerpt from a piece and other times with an entire work. Some of the alternate versions are simply at a slower tempo, which lets you enjoy new details and dive deeper into the music.

Kapustin, the composer

Nikolai Kapustin was a Ukrainian composer and pianist born in 1937, composing until his passing in 2020. His music is full of rich harmonies, memorable melodies, and rhythmic drive.

While he was not the first to combine classical and jazz idioms, his output is the most diverse and prolific fusion of the two. He took jazz harmonies and rhythms and applied them to many classical forms: sonatas, etudes, preludes, fugues, concertos, variations, and more.

Kapustin, the pianist

Kapustin was a prolific pianist as well. He captured almost 200 recordings of his own works, all of which showcase not just his compositional ingenuity but also his command of the piano.

Because recording equipment did not exist to capture the legendary playing of other composer-pianists including Frédéric Chopin, Clara Schumann, Franz Liszt, and others, we are very lucky to have such large documentation of one of the greatest composer-pianists of our time.



About me

Hello! I'm a Chicago-based pianist, designer, photographer, and composer. By day, I design websites and software. Outside of work, a large portion of my life is dedicated to piano and other creative endeavors.

I received my Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance and Music Composition at Florida International University, where I studied with Kemal Gekić.

I'm excited to release my debut album!

Thank you

A note of gratitude

I'm so grateful for the support and mentorship I've received over the years.

Thank you **Mom, Dad, David, Haley, and all of my friends and family.**

Thank you to all of my teachers:
Kemal Gekić, Giselle Brodsky, Misha Dacić, Silvije Vidović, Paul Posnak, and Walter Goodman.

And thank **you** for giving this a listen.

8 Concert Etudes, Op. 40 1984 | Nikolai Kapustin (1937 - 2020)

The etude is a musical composition designed to develop physical technique. Beginning with Frédéric Chopin, etudes transformed from uninspired exercises to musical expressions worthy of an audience. Kapustin has continued this tradition with his thrilling and complex set of concert pieces. While each etude does focus on particular technical challenges, the underlying musical ideas are rich with harmonic beauty and playful rhythms.

Etude Op. 40, No. 1 – “Prelude” 1 2

No. 1 is full of rhythmic drive and catchy themes. The improvisational sections of the piece are part of what inspired me to explore multiple versions of most pieces on the album.

Etude Op. 40, No. 2 – “Reverie” 3 4 27

Here we find a seemingly straightforward technical challenge: quickly alternating notes in the right hand. If we look deeper, however, there are many beautiful and even haunting harmonies and textures to discover.

Etude Op. 40, No. 4 – “Remembrance” 16

One of Kapustin’s more ethereal works, No. 4 has more in common with Impressionists like Claude Debussy than Jazz icons like Oscar Peterson. This piece is full of beautiful sparkling flurries and colorful melodic clusters.

I did not record any versions of No. 4 as it was intended to be played. By slowing the tempo dramatically, I’ve brought out harmonies, melodies, and phrasing that can’t usually be heard.

Variations, Op. 41 1984 | Nikolai Kapustin 9 17-25

The basic concept of the variations form is to take a melodic theme and write a series of compositions based on that theme. Kapustin uses this form as a canvas to combine completely different jazz styles into a series of short sections that connect seamlessly.

24 Preludes, Op. 53 1988 | Nikolai Kapustin

Kapustin, like many composers before him, wrote 24 short preludes in all 24 major and minor keys. He used this as an opportunity to explore numerous jazz styles.

Prelude Op. 53, No. 4 14 15

This prelude bounces around the piano, exploring call-and-response phrasing with contrasting textures and dynamics.

Prelude Op. 53, No. 5 7 8

While many of Kapustin's pieces take you for an energetic ride, this prelude offers a rare melodic melancholy.

24 Preludes and Fugues, Op. 82 1997 | Nikolai Kapustin

Johann Sebastian Bach's *48 Preludes and Fugues* (1722, 1742) are considered one of the most important contributions to classical music, and only a handful of composers have completed similar sets of preludes and fugues since. Kapustin's set is the modern equivalent, achieving the highest levels of melody, form, and counterpoint, all through a Jazz lens.

While preludes and fugues are usually performed together, I've focused on four preludes that sound great on their own.

Prelude Op. 82, No. 3 11

This prelude explores many memorable harmonies and sound effects through heavy swing and lots of attitude. Listen for pops, flicks, and—inevitably—your foot tapping to the rhythm.

Prelude Op. 82, No. 5 5 6

While much of Kapustin's music is already lively and fast-paced, this prelude feels like it was blasted out of a cannon and manages to sprinkle some Rock & Roll across the entire range of the piano.

Prelude Op. 82, No. 9 12 13 28 29

This prelude is one of my favorite pieces to play. The left and right hands chase and copy each other until they float away into an ethereal bliss.

Prelude Op. 82, No. 14 10

Kapustin was an expert at writing colorful sound effects. This short piece manages to explore a variety of pops, flicks, sustained notes, inner melodies, and more.

Prelude No. 1 1926 | George Gershwin (1898 - 1937) 26

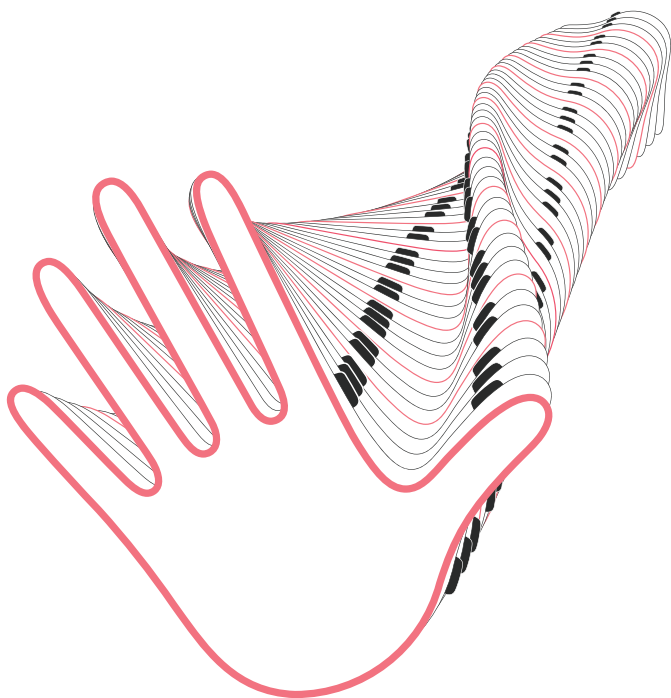
George Gershwin is one of the most beloved American composers, most famous for his *Rhapsody in Blue*. He also wrote countless other gems, like a set of three preludes. This prelude fits the album's spirit of fun, short, energetic classical-jazz fusion.

Improvisations & Interlude 2019 | Daniel Crespo (b. 1993) 30-33

In addition to playing music by other composers, I've always loved improvising and composing my own pieces. While this album focuses mostly on Kapustin's music, I spent some time between takes exploring whatever came to my fingers.

The last track is an improvisation based on Ryan Cohan's *River I. Departure* (Ryanism Music, BMI).





Nikolai Kapustin

- 1** **2** Etude Op. 40, No. 1 – “Prelude”
- 3** **4** Etude Op. 40, No. 2 – “Reverie”
- 5** **6** Prelude Op. 82, No. 5
- 7** **8** Prelude Op. 53, No. 5
- 9** Variations, Op. 41
- 10** Prelude Op. 82, No. 14
- 11** Prelude Op. 82, No. 3
- 12** **13** Prelude Op. 82, No. 9
- 14** **15** Prelude Op. 53, No. 4
- 16** Etude Op. 40, No. 4 – “Remembrance”
- 17-25** Variations, Op. 41 – Excerpts 1-9

George Gershwin

- 26** Prelude No. 1

Nikolai Kapustin

- 27** Etude Op. 40, No. 2 – “Reverie”
- 28** **29** Prelude Op. 82, No. 9

Daniel Crespo

- 30** Improvisation No. 1
- 31** Interlude
- 32** Improvisation No. 2
- 33** Improvisation No. 3

Based on Ryan Cohan's *River I. Departure*
(Ryanism Music, BMI)



Visit danielcrespo.net for more information.

Edited, mixed, and mastered by **Daniel Crespo**. Album cover, design, and photography by **Daniel Crespo**.

Recorded by **Rob Waller** at Nichols Hall on a Steinway Model D.

© 2021 Daniel Crespo. All rights reserved. Unauthorized duplication is a violation of applicable laws.