



# RHAPSODY IN BLUE

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A music dictionary defines a rhapsody as a free instrumental composition in one extended, emotional, exuberant movement. Rhapsody In Blue by George Gershwin is one of the most exciting tunes I have ever tried to learn and perform. It is also one of the hardest tunes for me to keep in my head/hands. I have learned, forgotten, and relearned sections many times over the past 4 years. I am, however, never discouraged because it is so beautiful, recognizable, and one of my only jazz pieces.

This arrangement is for a 5-octave hammer dulcimer. The dulcimers that I build have notes on the right side of the bass bridge starting with the E4 above middle C. The note on the right side of the E4 is D#6. For the next higher four courses (F4 to Bb4) it is two octaves across the bass bridge, and then I pickup a C7 on the right side of D#5 above Bb4. F6 is needed in measures 10 and 29. This can all be seen on the tuning diagrams on the INSTRUMENTS page of my web site. I have left the very high notes at the end of this arrangement as written because they can be played on a soprano dulcimer. When I am just using the 5-octave instrument I move these highest notes down an octave.

For me the hardest parts about remembering this music is the similarities between many of the phrases and the large distances between need notes. Sometimes the melody moves in subtle ways as in measures 41 through 46. Other times the reaches between notes is about as extreme as is possible. However, do not get discouraged in learning this piece...I think it is well worth the effort needed to master it. And it will take you to another level in your playing ability.

*Rick Fogel*