

# Rhapsody in Blue

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Rhapsody in Blue is a 1924 musical composition written by George Gershwin for solo piano and jazz band, which combines elements of classical music with jazz-influenced effects. It is one of Gershwin's most recognizable compositions and it helped define the Jazz Age of the 1920s.

"Rhapsody in Blue" is the quintessential American tune. There is something bold, brash, and explosive in its phrasing. The song conveys the American notion that anything is possible though the journey may be long and hard. There is an intangible sense of hope that is captured by the melody. Its distinctly American voice gives it a timeless factor, and certainly the American songbook wouldn't be fully complete without it.

In 1976, I attended a 4th of July ceremony on the Independence Mall in Washington DC to celebrate the USA's 200th anniversary. Close to a million people had assembled on a hot and steamy night to listen to various artists perform for the Independence celebration. My favorite was Johnny Cash and his Men in Black, who showed up all dressed in black (in the scorching heat!) to perform "I walk the line", "A Boy Named Sue", "Folsom Prison Blues", "Ring of Fire" and many others which seemed to celebrate independence in their own outlaw way. At midnight, the French Government sponsored a fireworks display as a bicentennial birthday gift to the USA. The air was filled with colorful bursts of fireworks as "Rhapsody in Blue" blasted out loud and clear from the loud speakers, with the explosions in the sky perfectly synchronized with the music. Ever since, when I hear Rhapsody in Blue, I think of that evening and of the bright bursts of light in the sky as the perfect illustration of the American dream.































































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