



LINN



ALEXANDRA NEPOMNYASHCHAYA



Gottlieb Muffat
*Componimenti musicali
per il cembalo*

Credits →

Tracklist →

Programme note →

Biography →

Gottlieb Muffat

*Componimenti musicali
per il cembalo*

ALEXANDRA NEPOMNYASHCHAYA



Recorded in Lurthese Kerk, Haarlem, the
Netherlands,
on 11–12 April 2023

Recording Producers
Richard Egarr, Philip Hobbs

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Philip Hobbs

Post-production
Julia Thomas

Label Manager
Timothée van der Stegen

Design
stoempstudio.com

Cover Image
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Gottlieb Muffat (1690–1770)

Componimenti musicali per il cembalo

145:05

MENU

ALEXANDRA NEPOMNYASHCHAYA
harpsichord

- | | | | | | | |
|----|----------------------------|---|--|----|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| | Suite I in C major | | | | Suite III in D major | |
| 1 | — | Ouverture: Alla breve,
ma tempo moderato – Fuga a
quattro: Allegretto – Adagio 3:35 | | 17 | — | Fantaisie: Grave – Vivace 2:42 |
| 2 | — | Allemande: Affettuoso 3:51 | | 18 | — | Allemande: Affettuoso 4:47 |
| 3 | — | Courante 2:08 | | 19 | — | Courante 2:19 |
| 4 | — | Air: Dolce 2:20 | | 20 | — | Sarabande: Adagio assai 4:32 |
| 5 | — | Rigaudon 1:09 | | 21 | — | Menuet 1:28 |
| 6 | — | Menuet & Trio 4:15 | | 22 | — | Rigaudon bizarre: Spiritoso 2:12 |
| 7 | — | Adagio 1:16 | | 23 | — | Air: Affettuoso 2:23 |
| 8 | — | Final: Allegro 2:53 | | 24 | — | Finale: Spiritoso 2:43 |
| | Suite II in G minor | | | | | |
| 9 | — | Prelude: Tempo giusto –
Allegretto – Adagio 2:45 | | | | |
| 10 | — | Allemande: Affettuoso 3:24 | | | | |
| 11 | — | Courante 2:16 | | | | |
| 12 | — | Sarabande 3:07 | | | | |
| 13 | — | Bourée 1:10 | | | | |
| 14 | — | Menuet & Trio 4:44 | | | | |
| 15 | — | Fantaisie: Allegro 1:53 | | | | |
| 16 | — | Gigue 2:55 | | | | |

		Suite IV in B flat major			Suite VI in G major
25	—	Fantaisie: Tempo giusto – Adagio –	42	—	Fantaisie: Vivace – Adagio 2:05
		Fuga a quattro: Spiritoso 5:03	43	—	Fuga a quattro: Vivace 2:13
26	—	Allemande: Affettuoso 2:49	44	—	Allemande: Spiritoso 2:52
27	—	Courante 1:59	45	—	Courante 2:08
28	—	Sarabande 2:52	46	—	Sarabande 3:11
29	—	La Hardiesse: Allegro 2:11	47	—	La Coquette 1:14
30	—	Menuet premier –	48	—	Menuet & Trio 3:09
		Menuet second 4:13	49	—	Air: Vivace 1:31
31	—	Air: Cantabile 1:45	50	—	Gigue: Allegro 2:24
32	—	Hornepippe: Spiritoso 2:10	51	—	Menuet en cornes de chasse 1:41
33	—	Gigue: Allegro assai 2:23			
		Suite V in D minor	52	—	Suite VII in G major
34	—	Ouverture: Allegretto – Vivace 3:34			Ciacona con 38 Variationi:
35	—	Allemande: Affettuoso 2:46			Spiritoso 9:09
36	—	Courante 2:36			
37	—	Sarabande 3:05			
38	—	Menuet 1:31			
39	—	Rigaudon: Spiritoso 1:47			
40	—	Menuet & Trio 4:06			
41	—	Gigue 1:40			

Harpsichord: Joel Katzman, Amsterdam, 1991 (after Ruckers, Antwerp, 1638)

Pitch: a' = 409hz

Temperament: Young-Vallotti

A little-missed Muffat ...

Most of us like jam, and probably have a particular ‘safe’ fruit preference. Occasionally we might make exciting exceptions, perhaps when travelling abroad – lingonberry, red jalapeño, or strawberry and chilli. My own personal recommendation is tomato jam. Music programming and listening habits can be similar in their ‘safety’, which is a great pity. There are many delicious musical flavours to be found if one ventures from the ‘strawberry’ path.

Who then is Gottlieb Muffat? He is even less well-known and performed than his father, Georg Muffat (1653–1704). Georg (who worked for the Archbishop of Salzburg) was a significant musician, who importantly brought together the French and Italian styles in his numerous string ‘Concerti grossi’ and instrumental suites. Most Baroque music fans will know some of these from recordings, and (if lucky) may have heard one live in concert. Gottlieb Muffat (1690–1770) was his son, and attained far greater success in his working life. In 1711 he became *Hofscholar* under Johann Fux in Vienna. In 1717 he was appointed third court organist to Charles VI, Holy Roman Emperor and ruler of the Austrian Habsburg monarchy, who governed from 1711 until his death in 1740.

Charles was a great patron, and quite skilled as a musician. He nurtured Gottlieb’s talents, promoting him to second organist in 1729. In 1741 Empress Maria Theresa finally raised him to the position of first organist.



Gottlieb had a superb and thorough grounding in music from his father and Fux, but his music reflects the latest tastes of his own time and environment. The craving for ‘all things French’ during the middle of the eighteenth century infected everything, and Gottlieb’s musical language certainly demonstrates this. Unlike his father, Gottlieb composed almost exclusively music for keyboard to demonstrate his own prowess, publishing two significant collections. The first, titled *72 Versetl sammt 12 Toccaten* and published in Vienna in 1729, is a surprisingly conservative collection of ‘organ’ pieces for liturgical use. Fast-forward ten years to 1739, his *Componimenti musicali per il cembalo* couldn’t be more different. A lavish publication from a high-end Viennese publisher in a limited print run of around 500 copies, this ‘harpsichord’ volume displays enormous virtuosity, devastating elegance, and an up-to-the-minute musical language, adorned with the most extraordinary contemporary ornamental practice. It is warmly dedicated to his patron Charles VI.

The preface to this edition by Gottlieb himself provides some wonderful personal insights and excellent performance information. Gottlieb seems very confident and comfortable in describing his own work in this collection as ‘in my opinion ... the most beautiful product to be met with in all Germany’.



The music in the *Componimenti* is divided into seven sections. Unlike Bach, Handel and others, Gottlieb did not designate these sections as ‘Suites’ or ‘Partitas’, and simply prefaced each part with a Roman numeral. However, they are in reality organised as ‘Suites’. Each one contains a unique opening movement, a number of ‘regular’ dance movements (such as Allemande, Courante Sarabande, etc.), and other assorted modern ‘Galanteries’ (La Coquette, Rigaudon bizarre, etc.). Parts VI & VII seem to form one mega-Suite in G major. Part VII is a brilliant ‘Ciacona’ based on the same standard chaconne bass as Handel’s huge Chaconne from 1733, and Bach’s Goldberg Variations from 1741. It acts as a final immense jewelled brooch placed after the already dazzling part VI.

Each of these six Suites has its own strong character based on the tonality:

- I. C major: pure, simple
- II. G minor: dark, dramatic
- III. D major: noble, regal, uplifting
- IV. B flat major: optimistic, hopeful
- V. D minor: stormy, tragic
- VI. G major + VII. ‘Ciacona: Spiritoso’: happiness, joy



Gottlieb Muffat's name is sometimes met in connection with Handel's notoriety for pilfering other composer's music. There is no evidence to suggest that they ever met each other. As important musicians it is more than likely that they were aware of each other's music. Any theft in either direction would not have made the news as it does today. To use, borrow, or insinuate a thematic idea from another composer might genuinely have been seen as a form of flattery or tribute. Gottlieb certainly adored Handel, as he troubled himself to make his own highly decorated versions of Handel's 1720 suites and the 1735 fugues.

Gottlieb's music is rich in every respect: texture, emotional range, and flamboyant decoration. Particularly stunning are the Allemandes, five of which are marked 'affettuoso'. There are many helpful tempo and character indications in the score, which is quite unusual for the time: *Dolce*, *Adagio assai*, *Spiritoso*, *Cantabile*, etc. The score is also full of complex repeats given by large and small 'petite reprise' markings. If all these were taken the length of the movements would be considerable, in particular the final Ciacona. This recording has hopefully provided a sufficient, satisfying and judicious presentation of each work.

Perhaps the most breathtaking element of this music is the ornamentation, all of which is carefully notated in the magnificent score. Gottlieb provides an explanation of all the ornament signs used in an appendix at the end of the volume. There are 57 ornaments given, with 45 explanations. They encompass not only the familiar, but also purely expressive signs such as sobbing staccato detachment, and many varieties of portamento and arpeggiation. All these should serve as a reminder that any ornamentation of a line is there to add expressivity, and not irritation.

Gottlieb Muffat's meals are highly sumptuous and are best consumed without haste. They represent one of the pinnacles of keyboard music from the mid-eighteenth century, and deserve their place in our musical pantry. Bach may be a dark blackberry jam; Handel perhaps a chunky English marmalade. What Jam Muffat?

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Alexandra Nepomnyashchaya

harpsichord

Russian-born pianist and harpsichordist Alexandra Nepomnyashchaya is in great demand both as a soloist and as a chamber musician. In 2009 she graduated from the Faculty of Historical and Contemporary Performance at the Moscow Conservatory in the class of Olga Martynova, where she studied piano, harpsichord and fortepiano. Alexandra continued her studies at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam with Richard Egarr and Menno van Delft, gaining a Master's degree. In July 2015 Alexandra graduated with the Zertifikatsstudium Meisterklasse Degree from the Hochschule für Musik und Theater München under Christine Schornsheim.

Alexandra has won top prizes at competitions including the Prague Spring International Music Competition in 2012 and the International Johann Sebastian Bach Competition Leipzig in 2014. Her love for chamber music and solo performance has brought her to major venues and festivals all over Europe, Russia and Asia. She has appeared at Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Barbican in London, as well as in the Festival Oude Muziek Utrecht, Prague Spring International Music Festival, Innsbrucker Festwochen der Alten Musik and Hong Kong Arts Festival among others. She also appeared in Lapland with the Lapland Chamber orchestra playing harpsichord and modern piano in repertoire spanning four centuries. She works regularly with the Residentie Orkest, Antwerp Symphony Orchestra and Academy of Ancient music.

Alexandra works at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague as a keyboard repetiteur and coach. Her debut recording on fortepiano was released in 2009, featuring Mozart sonatas for piano and violin with violinist Sergei Filchenko. Alexandra and her husband Richard Egarr formed Duo Pleyel in 2017 to explore the exciting world of four-hand keyboard repertoire that is so often unjustly ignored. Their repertoire includes J. C. Bach, Dussek, Czerny, Hummel and Liszt, alongside Mozart, Schubert and later nineteenth- and twentieth-century composers.



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