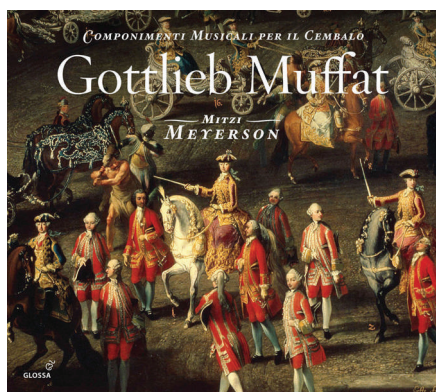


GCD 921804
 New release information
 February 2009

Gottlieb Muffat by Mitzi Meyerson



Gottlieb Muffat
Componimenti Musicali per il Cembalo

Mitzi Meyerson, harpsichord

Glossa GCD 921804
 2 CDs – digipak

Programme

Gottlieb Muffat (1690-1770)
 Componimenti Musicali per il Cembalo (c.1736)

CD I [72:21]

01-08 Suite V
 09-16 Suite III
 17-25 Suite VI

CD II [77:46]

01-08 Suite I
 09-16 Suite II
 17-25 Suite IV
 26 Suite VII (Chaconne)

Production details

Recorded in Berlin-Karlshorst (Kirche Zur frohen Botschaft), Germany, in October 2006
 Engineered and produced by Maria Suschke
 Executive producer: Carlos Céster
 Design: Valentín Iglesias
 Booklet essay: Boris Kehrmann
 English - Français - Deutsch - Español



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NOTES (ENG)

Mitzi Meyerson's insight into (and experience with) the harpsichord literature is such that when she makes a visit to the recording studio, one knows that something rare, fascinating and illuminating will emerge.

Her latest exploration beyond the mainstream of Baroque music sees the Chicago (born and honoured) performer turn to the *Componimenti Musicali* of Gottlieb Muffat – not the Georg Muffat who studied in Paris with Lully but his son –, almost the only surviving score of a musician now forgotten but active at the Imperial Court in Vienna in the middle of the 18th century. Across a collection of six suites (and a final innovative *Chaconne*) full of contrasting moods, Mitzi Meyerson explores the eclectic and distinctly unacademic world of Muffat, by way of all manner of variations, dances – from *Courantes*, *Sarabandes*, *Menuets* and *Allemandes* to *Gigues* –, improvisations as well as character pieces reflecting a range of national styles.

A recording which captures the joy and dash of the Baroque and which leaves one asking, like, Mitzi Meyerson, "Why did Gottlieb Muffat get lost in the shuffle of time?"

NOTAS (ESP)

Mitzi Meyerson posee una percepción (y una experiencia) tan profunda de la literatura para clavecín que cada una de sus visitas a los estudios de grabación anuncia que algo raro, fascinante, iluminador, está a punto de surgir...

En su nueva exploración más allá del repertorio tradicional de la música barroca, la celebrada intérprete nacida en Chicago –ciudad que la adora–, se adentra en los *Componimenti Musicali* de Muffat, no Georg, que estudió en París con Lully, sino su hijo, Gottlieb. Esos *Componimenti* son prácticamente las únicas obras que sobrevivieron de este músico, activo en la corte imperial vienesa en pleno siglo XVIII y hoy completamente olvidado. Recorriendo una colección de seis suites (y una innovadora *Chaconne*) hechas de atmósferas contrastadas, Mitzi Meyerson explora el mundo ecléctico y decididamente no académico de Muffat, mediante toda clase de variaciones, danzas –courantes, zarabandas, minuets, alemandas, gigas–, improvisaciones y piezas de carácter que reflejan un amplio abanico de estilos nacionales.

Esta grabación expresa toda la alegría y el arrojo del Barroco, y nos lleva a hacernos la misma pregunta que Mitzi Meyerson: «¿Cómo un compositor como Gottlieb Muffat pudo caer en el olvido con el paso del tiempo?»

NOTES (FRA)

Mitzi Meyerson possède une perception (et une expérience) si profonde de la littérature pour clavecin que chacune de ses visites dans les studios d'enregistrement laisse présager quelque chose de rare, de fascinant, d'illuminant...

Dans sa nouvelle exploration au-delà du répertoire traditionnel de la musique baroque, l'interprète célébrée par Chicago, sa ville natale, se plonge dans les *Componimenti Musicali* de Muffat, non pas Georg qui étudia à Paris avec Lully, mais son fils, Gottlieb. Les *Componimenti* forment pratiquement le seul recueil ayant survécu de ce musicien actif à la cour impériale de Vienne en plein XVIIIe siècle, mais aujourd'hui oublié. Feuilletant une collection de six suites (et une innovante *Chaconne*) faites d'atmosphères contrastées, Mitzi Meyerson explore le monde éclectique et clairement non académique de Muffat, à travers toutes sortes de variations, danses – courantes, sarabandes, menuets, allemandes, gigues –, improvisations et pièces de caractère qui reflètent un ample éventail de styles nationaux.

Cet enregistrement exprimant toute la joie et l'éclat du baroque, nous amène à nous poser la même question que Mitzi Meyerson : « Pourquoi Gottlieb Muffat a-t-il été oublié, balayé, par le temps qui passe ? »

NOTIZEN (DEU)

Man weiß genau, dass etwas ganz Besonderes, Erhellendes und Faszinierendes herauskommen wird, wenn Mitzi Meyerson sich ins Aufnahmestudio begibt, da sie so genaue Kenntnis und so viel Erfahrung mit dem Repertoire für Cembalo hat.

Ihre letzte Erkundung jenseits der Grenzen des barocken Mainstreams führte die in Chicago geborene und dort hochgeehrte Künstlerin zu den *Componimenti Musicali* von Gottlieb Muffat – nicht etwa zu dem in Paris bei Lully ausgebildeten Georg Muffat, sondern zu dessen Sohn. Dies ist beinahe das einzige überlieferte Werk jenes heute vergessenen Musikers, der in der Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts am kaiserlichen Hof in Wien wirkte. In dieser Sammlung von sechs Suiten voll kontrastierender Stimmungen (mit einer abschließenden innovativen *Chaconne*) erforscht Mitzi Meyerson Muffats vielseitige und ausgesprochen unakademische Welt, in der alle Arten von Variationen, Tänzen – von Couranten, Sarabanden, Menuetten und Allemanden bis zu Gigen –, Improvisationen ebenso wie Charakterstücke eine ganze Reihe von unterschiedlichen Nationalstilen widerspiegeln.

Diese Aufnahme fängt die ganze Freude und Energie des Barock ein und lässt den Zuhörer zusammen mit Mitzi Meyerson fragen: »Wer hat die Karten so gemischt, dass Gottlieb Muffat im Laufe der Zeit in Vergessenheit geraten konnte?«

A short interview with Mitzi Meyerson



Mitzi Meyerson's insight into (and experience with) the harpsichord literature of the Baroque is such that when she makes a visit to the recording studio, one knows that something rare, fascinating and illuminating will emerge. This has been the case in recent years with both the *Claviersuiten* by Georg Böhm and the *Musique de Salon* of Claude-Bénigne Balbastre (which have also appeared on Glossa); the latest exploration beyond the mainstream undertaken by Mitzi Meyerson – Muffat's *Componimenti Musicali* – is charged with the same character and sense of expectation. This is not the Georg Muffat who studied in Paris with Lully but his son, Gottlieb (also known as Theofilo), who spent much of his career in Vienna and whose set of six harpsichord suites *Componimenti Musicali* appeared towards the end of the 1730s.

In the accompanying booklet Meyerson discusses the contrasting moods running through the entire collection of suites, wherein are to be found a diverse selection of *Courantes*, *Sarabandes*, *Menuets*, *Allemandes* and *Gigues* as well as *Fantaisies* and *Fugues*. Meyerson comments that "It is exactly this eclectic and whimsical quality in all the suites that I find so special. One is carried along, but cannot figure where and why." The final *Chaconne* of the *Componimenti Musicali* bears a theme which shows that Muffat's music was much appreciated by composers of his own time – the theme reappears in one of Handel's harpsichord suites. Meyerson is less troubled, indeed more intrigued by such Baroque "borrowings", welcoming the different treatment given by different composers to the same themes.

Mitzi Meyerson currently teaches harpsichord at the Universität der Künste in Berlin but her roots in her native Chicago run very deep and the City Council there have seen fit to honour her recently – as she describes in the interview here. In addition, Chicago looks set to have a street named after Mitzi Meyerson as well!

How would you describe the musical world of Gottlieb Muffat and his father Georg?

The story of Gottlieb (or, as I like to think of him, Theofilo) really begins with his famous father, Georg. Georg was born in 1653 in Savoy of Scottish parents. He had an incredibly international upbringing, being sent to Paris to study with Lully, returned to Alsace, and then finished his law education in Bavaria. After this he moved to Vienna where he had the patronage of Leopold I, and was promoted to the post of First Organist in the Viennese Court. He was allowed to travel to Italy and was there influenced by the music of Corelli. The compositions of Georg Muffat combined the flavours of French, German and Italian idioms in a unique way. He was enormously respected as a player and composer, and his children were heirs to many opportunities. Theofilo went to live with his musician brother in Vienna, after their father's death. He had the good fortune to become the protégé of Johann Joseph Fux, and assisted in the very important opera by Fux, *Costanza e Fortezza* for the 1717 première in Prague. Theofilo was himself later appointed First Organist in the Viennese Court, where his duties included teaching the royal children. He also was considered one of the greatest organists and composers of his time, but he stopped composing after he achieved his position in the court. Unfortunately there are very few pieces left to us, but they are wonderfully creative, challenging all the previously existing boundaries of harmony and character. The *Componimenti Musicali* on this recording represents his entire legacy of harpsichord music.

What made you want to record Gottlieb Muffat's works, given their obscurity?

I chose to record this music for the same reason I recorded all my other solo CDs: very few people are interested in it! By this I do not mean that these projects have no merit – on the contrary, every one is particularly fascinating. Unfortunately they have been overlooked in the mainstream repertoire. I felt myself on a crusade to hunt out these neglected works and bring them into the limelight, at least for a moment. It is a wonderful privilege to be given the opportunity to do this.

What in Muffat's music made it so tempting for a composer such as Handel for the latter's "borrowings"?

I think it was quite accepted for all composers to borrow themes or tricks of writing. If we are straight-laced, we call it stealing; if we are generous, we call it an *homage*. There are endless examples of this, from the smallest whiff of reminiscence right down to the direct repetition of entire themes. There are some who say JS Bach borrowed the idea for the *Goldberg Variations* from Buxtehude's *La Capricciosa*, a set of 32 variations in the same key which has many striking similarities. As we know Bach to have been a great admirer of Buxtehude, it would be a natural thing for him to take musical advice from one whom he so revered. And what of it? We are the beneficiaries, having received both sets of marvellous variations.

You concentrate on music of the Baroque time in your work, but do other musical styles interest or influence you as well?

I have spent a lot of time in Indonesia over the last dozen years (working also as a doula in a clinic) and am extremely fond of Javanese suling and gamelan music. In fact, it is my favourite thing to listen to, and headed up my "10 CDs for a Desert Island" list for Goldberg magazine in 2007. I have recently become somewhat obsessed with salsa music, and dance around to this while cooking. Does that count?!

You were recently honoured by your native Chicago. How did that come about?

This was a very unexpected honour! I received an e-mail one day saying that April 5 would be declared "Mitzi Meyerson Day" in Chicago and its environs. I thought it was a delightful joke, but then I was sent the official letter stating that in fact this had been passed as a resolution in the mayor's office. I had a concert in Chicago that day; at the end of it I was presented with the certificate, and the entire audience was invited onto the stage for champagne and cake. I live rather quietly, doing my work as best I can. It was a charming surprise to get a public notice for this. I always thought there were around eleven people in the world who were interested in my little projects! I know that harpsichord music is not a best-selling venture, and that my particular projects appeal to an even smaller subdivision of the tiny interest that exists commercially. For this reason I am especially grateful to Glossa for providing the opportunity to bring these long-gone works back into the world. Without this support, Theofilo Muffat might have remained silent forever.

by Mark Wiggins
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