

PRESS RELEASE: New album:

Georg Muffat: *Apparatus musico-organisticus* APL34818



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Washington DC, January 31, 2023:

New Album from Kola Owolabi drops today and features monolithic work of the South German baroque, and the double debut of two new North American pipe organs at Christ Church Cathedral, Cincinnati.

Unlike the works of J.S. Bach (1685–1750) and Buxtehude (c. 1637–1707) which epitomize the Central and Northern German schools of organ composition, the music of the South German baroque is less well-known, and less frequently performed or recorded.

The composer whose *magnum opus* features on both volumes of this new album is GEORG MUFFAT, a contemporary of Buxtehude. According to OWOLABI, “Muffat’s *blending* of Italian, French and German musical styles...creates a different sound world than other baroque composers interested in such stylistic *synthesis*, such as Handel and Bach.” The result is an exciting reflection of Muffat’s upbringing at the crossroads of four modern European Nations: France, Switzerland, Italy, and Germany—borderlands and trade routes that shaped his experience and his voice. The music often demonstrates an “exuberantly festive tone,” and features the Italian style of Frescobaldi, Pasquini, and Corelli—French overture styles and fugues are ever present—and in addition, the *stylus phantasticus* and sophisticated counterpoint of Northern Germany makes its mark. *Apparatus musico-organisticus*, is one of the most significant 17th-century examples of the South German baroque and is rarely recorded, and this is the first time it has been performed on two North American instruments, and in the same building.

The necessity of two organs to present this work is explained best by the music itself: there are 12 Toccatas, eight in the eight church modes that work in meantone, and 4 that explore the keys of E minor, D-mixolydian, C minor and Bb major, which only sound in tune on a “well-tempered” instrument. After visiting Cincinnati on a field trip with his students, OWOLABI, “became smitten” with the idea “of recording the pieces in this collection” on the two new Cathedral instruments: the newly built Italian baroque style organ by C. B. Fisk, Opus 148 (two manuals, 22 ranks, modified meantone) in the Centennial Chapel, and the Richards, Fowkes & Co., Opus 24, 2020 (three manuals, 60 ranks, well-tempered). OWOLABI observed, “I’ve followed the path of several artists like Martin Haselböck of recording this collection on two different instruments. However, this is the first instance where both instruments are in the same building. As far as I know, it is the only recording of Muffat’s complete collection that is recorded on North American instruments.”

The recording was engineered by Acis’ lead engineer, Kevin Bourassa, and produced by harpsichordist and baroque expert, Joseph Gascho.

GEORGE MUFFAT: Born in Savoy, where modern-day France, Switzerland, and Italy meet, Muffat received his foundational musical training from the age of 10 at the Court of King Louis XIV. At the age of 16, he continued his studies with the Jesuits in Selestat, a town 12 miles west of the Rhine and the present border with Germany, and 50 miles north of Basel.

PRESS RELEASE: New album:

Georg Muffat: *Apparatus musico-organisticus* APL34818

[cont./]



Following the Thirty Years War, political instability forced Muffat to seek his fortune beyond Alsace—first in Vienna, and then Prague. Ultimately he settled in Salzburg in 1678 as cathedral organist and chamber musician at the court of the Prince-Archbishop, who later granted him permission to study in Rome with Bernardo Pasquini (1637–1710) and where he attended performances by Arcangelo Corelli (1653–1713). After being passed over for promotion in favor of his colleague Heinrich Ignaz Franz von Biber (1644–1704), Muffat again attempted to gain a position at the Viennese Court, presenting his *Apparatus musico-organisticus*, the work featured on this album, to the new Holy Roman Emperor, Joseph I, at his coronation in 1690.

KOLA OWOLABI: is Professor of Organ at the University of Notre Dame where he teaches the graduate organ performance majors in the sacred music program. He studied organ performance and choral conducting at McGill University, Montreal, Yale University and Eastman School of Music, and has an international career, being sought out to inaugurate new instruments and perform on historic recital series. He was a featured performer at the American Guild of Organists national conventions in Seattle, 2021 and in Boston, 2014. He has performed numerous concerts as organist and harpsichordist with the GRAMMY®-nominated vocal ensemble Seraphic Fire and Firebird Chamber Orchestra, based in Miami, Florida.



APL34818

Release Date: January 31, 2023

DPK, Covers, Booklet, Audio for Reviewers: www.acisproductions.com/owolabi-press

Available for streaming on all services.

Master-quality downloads (44.1kHz and 192kHz) and CDs available from
www.acisproductions.com

#muffat #pipeorgan #organist #fisk #richardsfowkes #releaseday #classicalalbum

[ENDS./]