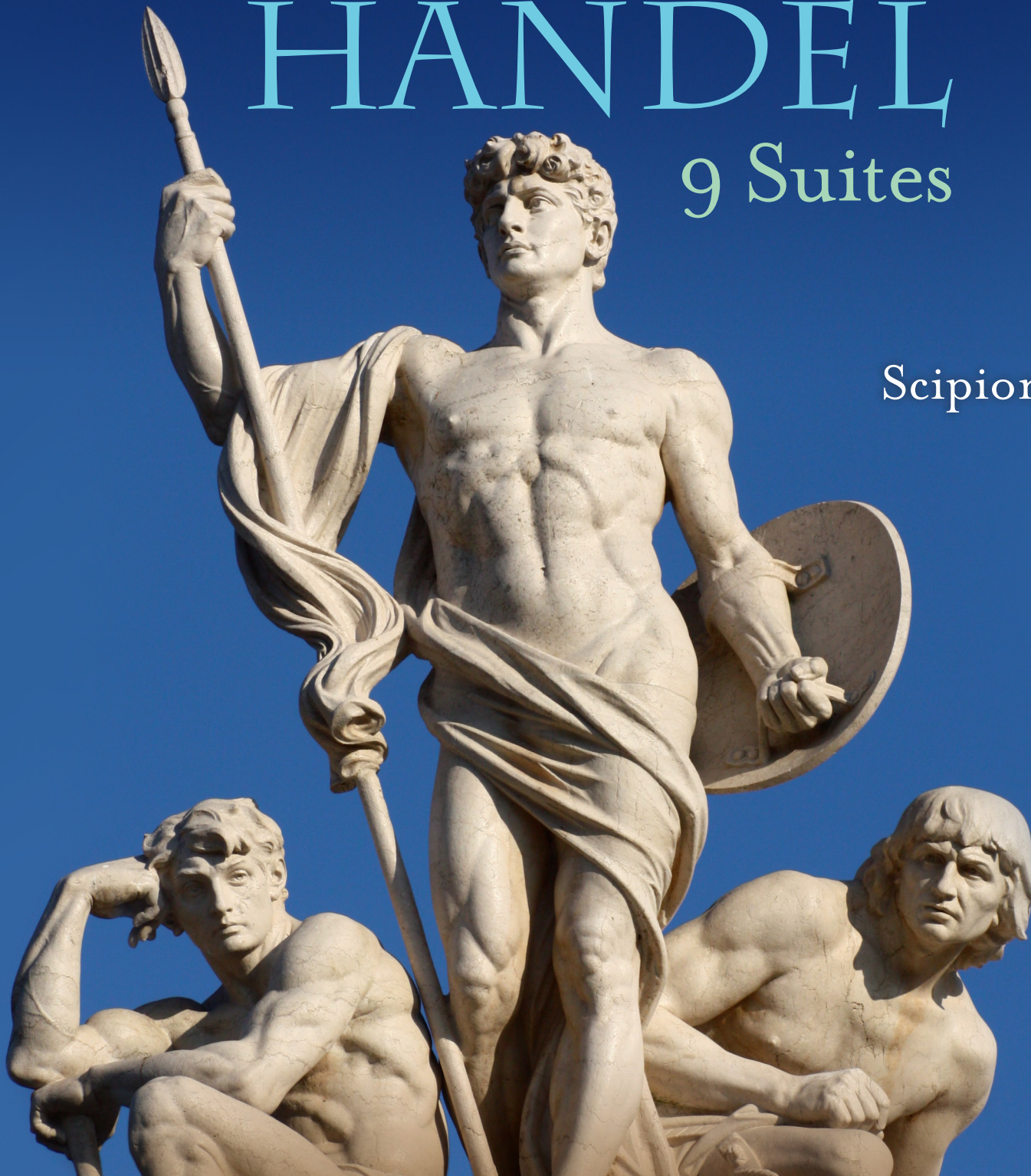


# HANDEL

## 9 Suites

PIANO  
CLASSICS

Scipione Sangiovanni  
*piano*



## GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL 1685-1759

<b>Suite in B-Flat Major</b>		<b>Suite in G Minor</b>	
<b>HWV 434</b>		<b>HWV 439</b>	
1 I. Praeludium	2'18	1 I. Allemande	6'23
2 II. Sonata	2'10	2 II. Courante	3'29
3 III. Aria con variazione	4'16	3 III. Gigue	4'41
4 IV. Minuetto	3'49		
		<b>Suite in B-Flat Major</b>	
5 <b>Ciaccona in G Major</b>		<b>HWV 440</b>	
<b>HWV 435</b>	11'16	4 I. Allemande	2'21
		5 II. Courante	1'30
		6 III. Sarabande	2'56
		7 IV. Gigue	1'30
		<b>Suite in G Major</b>	
		<b>HWV 441</b>	
		8 I. Allemande	2'05
6 I. Allemande	3'33	9 II. Allegro	3'50
7 II. Allegro	1'32	10 III. Courante	3'10
8 III. Air	3'01	11 IV. Aria	1'40
9 IV. Gigue	1'53	12 V. Minuetto	3'38
10 V. Minuetto	5'03	13 VI. Gavotto	2'49
		14 VII. Gigue	2'45
		<b>Ciaccona in G Major</b>	
		<b>HWV 442</b>	
		15 I. Praeludium	1'13
		16 II. Ciaccona con variazioni	14'20
		<b>Suite in D Minor</b>	
		<b>HWV 437</b>	
11 I. Allemande	2'25		
12 II. Courante	1'24		
13 III. Sarabande con variazione	3'38		
14 IV. Gigue	0'53		
		<b>Suite in E Minor</b>	
		<b>HWV 438</b>	
15 I. Allemande	2'53		
16 II. Sarabande	3'59		
17 III. Gigue	1'47		

The origins of the second volume of Handel's keyboard music, containing the works which were to become HWV 434-442, take us into the murky world of 18th century music publishing in which the creative intentions of the composer were not always paramount and the printed product often inferior to manuscript copies in private circulation. Before 1720, Handel had taken little interest in publishing the relatively few works he had written specifically for keyboard, many of which date from his time in Hamburg (1703- 1706). However, the appearance in 1719 or 1720 of an edition produced under the imprint of the Amsterdam printer Jeanne Roger and containing what Handel referred to as "surreptitious and incorrect copies" of several of his works for clavecin, galvanised him into action. The exact provenance of the Roger edition is unclear: it was certainly produced with the English market in mind, employing Anglicised terms e.g. Corrant, Jig, and printed in a style more characteristic of London rather than the continent. John Walsh, who had published Handel's music periodically from 1711, is generally assumed to have been involved – although whether the Roger imprint was an outright forgery by Walsh (as was the case with his later pirated editions of the Op 1 and 2 sonatas) or had been used in a genuine collaboration between the two printers is unknown. Whoever was responsible, Handel's reaction was swift and decisive. In June 1720 he acquired a Royal Privilege granting him monopoly rights over the publication of his works and then produced his own edition, printed by John Cluer in November the same year. This contained several of the works found in Roger, often in substantially reworked versions, together with some more recent pieces, all grouped into what became known as the "Eight Great Suites" (HWV426-433). The Cluer edition was titled "Suites de Pieces pour le Clavecin - Premier Volume" and in

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the preface, Handel indicated that, should it be favourably received, he would publish more: "reckoning it my duty with my small talent to serve a Nation from which I have received so generous a protection".

Ten years were to pass before Handel eventually appeared to have made good on that promise with the publication in or around 1730 of an identically titled "Second Volume". This, however, had absolutely nothing to do with him. This time responsibility can definitely be laid at John Walsh's door - although the first (probably limited) printing appeared without an imprint, an identical edition (save for some minor corrections) appeared c1732 under Walsh's name, followed by a third, with a radical internal rearrangement, in 1733 or mid-late 1734. Although Walsh may have been wary of infringing Handel's privilege with the first speculative printing, hence the attempted anonymity, he seems not to have been so concerned in respect of the second two versions, and the third may actually have appeared after the expiry of Handel's monopoly in June 1734. It is possible that, despite Walsh's previous outrageous behaviour, Handel simply decided to accept this as a fait accompli, since from around this time Walsh's business (soon to be taken over by his son also called John) became the sole outlet for his printed works. The Second Volume was heavily reliant on the Roger edition, being largely made up of whatever material Handel had not selected for use in the 1720 Cluer volume, supplemented by three works - the suites D minor (HWV436) and G (HWV 441) and a Chaconne in G (HWV 435) - taken from other sources. Thus its contents seem to have been determined more by what was readily available rather than as the result of careful selection. It was, in the words of the Handel scholar Terence Best "a scrappy production" - the suites were un-numbered and untitled, each set delineated merely

by key and the appearance of a standard introductory piece (a Prelude or Allemand) at its head. The work was error-strewn and displayed no stylistic conformity, with the Roger-derived materials retaining their Anglicised spellings (Corrant, Jigg) , and the others following the style of their manuscript sources (Corante, Gigue). Some of the original Roger suites were also edited to remove material which Handel had included in revised form in the Cluer edition (the original Prelude from HWV440 and the Sarabande from HWV 439).

The reordering of the contents for the 1733/4 edition (by altering the sequence of the existing plates - not a difficult process since Walsh used single not conjunct plates) created new juxtapositions. In the 1730 and 1732 printings, the collection began with a suite in G major (HWV441) preceded by a *Prelude* in the same key. This was in fact a transposition of an *Allegro* in F taken from what was to become the second of the "Eight Great Suites" (HWV 427) but which had been replaced in the Cluer edition. The 1733/4 edition now opened with the B flat minor suite (HWV 434) so this *Prelude* had to find a new home and was relocated to serve as an introduction to the concluding mighty *Chaconne* in the same key. Walsh may have deliberately followed the example of a 1732 Dutch edition in which it had been prefaced by twenty bars of a transcription of "Vo far Guerra" from *Rinaldo*, but it was probably simply an economical way for him to recycle an existing page of music in a place where it was, at least tonally, appropriate. The G minor minuet , placed after the *Air and Variations* of HWV434 in the original running order, retained that position when the entire suite moved. The minuet had been paired in the Roger edition with a G minor overture, which Walsh did not use, and may have been intended by him as a stand-alone "space

filler” but, despite having no relationship to the other parts of HWV 434 it is now treated as an integral part of it. Its natural home may in fact be within HWV 439, also in G minor, since a manuscript exists in which it is placed between the second and third movements. The most dubious element of the Second Volume is the suite in G (HWV 441) for which there are no autograph scores or manuscript copies confirming Handel’s authorship, resulting in some disagreement as to which of it can confidently be attributed to him. The *Aria* is linked elsewhere to William Babell and the *Gavotte* also bears a close thematic resemblance to one of his pieces so it is possible, perhaps, probable that the suite is a *pasticcio* of Walsh’s creation, combining some genuine Handelian material (the *Courante*?) with works by others.

Was Handel in any way involved with the final edition of 1733/4? A comment in an annotated copy once owned by his friend Bernard Granville (and now lost) asserted that it was made without his approval and it is hard to believe that Handel would have chosen the uninspiring tonal sequence involving successive suites in the same key or countenanced the obvious errors including the omission of the bass note from the first chord of the first piece! The final rearrangement, which demoted the dubious HWV441 to a less prominent position may perhaps have carried out at his request but otherwise there is nothing to connect him with it. This is what distinguishes the Second Volume and its content from its predecessor: in 1720, Handel had taken the trouble to subject the early material to substantial reworking, such that these youthful productions are now seen through the prism of his experience - a very successful exercise in pouring old wine into new bottles. However, for whatever reason - lack of time or inclination - he chose not to repeat this process for materials of the Walsh edition and since these were mainly pieces he had omitted from his selection for Cluer volume, he may

simply not have considered them representative of his best work. Precise dating of Handel’s keyboard music is difficult but virtually all the contents of the Second Volume predate 1706 (the exceptions being HWV434 from before 1717/8 and HWV436 from between 1721 and 1726), and so, having received no further attention from the mature composer, they retain a sense of the confident if sometimes undisciplined exuberance of his youth.

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## SCIPIONE SANGIOVANNI

Scipione Sangiovanni is one of the most distinguished Italian pianists of his generation. He has played at many prestigious venues, including Carnegie Hall - Weill Recital Hall (New York), Palau de la Musica Catalana (Barcelona), Casa da Musica (Porto), Salle Cortot (Paris), Museo del Teatro alla Scala and Sala Giuseppe Verdi (Milano), Mozarteum (Salzburg), Megaron Mousikis (Athens), Konzerthaus (Berlin), Centro Nacional de las artes (Mexico City), Steinway Hall (Miami) and Salle Moliere (Lyon), amongst others.

He has won First Prize in many international piano competitions, including *Città di Marsala*, *Premio Monopoli* in Barletta, *Premio Chopin* in Rome, *Svetislav Stancic* in Zagreb, *Rina Sala Gallo* in Monza and the *Debut International Piano Competition* in New York. He was also a prizewinner at *Premio Jaen*, *Maria Canals*, *Tbilisi International Piano Competition*, *Concurso Internacional de Musica da Cidade do Porto*, *Hastings*, *Città di Cantù*, *Lagny sur Marne*, *Arcangelo Speranza*, *Ricard Vines* and *Premio Iturbi* in Valencia.

His commercial recordings include his transcription for solo piano of Antonio Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* (Urania Records 2013) and a Bach monograph (Suonare News 2016).

He has played with the "Giuseppe Verdi" Orchestra of Milano, Croatian Radio-Television Orchestra (HRT), Valencia Symphony Orchestra and the Royal Philharmonic Concerto Orchestra of London.

He teaches piano at the Umberto Giordano Conservatory in Foggia. Sangiovanni has played a Kawai piano since 2010.





