

DA VINCI CLASSICS

WILHELM KEMPFF

LIEDER

GIUSEPPE AULETTA
VOICE

GIOVANNI AULETTA
PIANO

WILHELM KEMPFF
(B JÜTERBOG, 25 NOV 1895; D POSITANO, 23 MAY 1991)

LIEDER

Vier Lieder aus Alten Zeiten (*Old German Minnelied*)

[01]	Schlafest du, Geliebter mein? *Lyrics by Dietmar von Aist*	3:26
[02]	Der Kuß *Lyrics by Friedrich v. Hagedorn*	2:18
[03]	Sommer ohnegleichen *Poet unknown*	3:01
[04]	Aus den '**Troerinnen**': Gebet des Euripides	2:12

Acht Lieder nach Goethe

[05]	Wandrers Nachtlied (a)	1:53
[06]	Die Freuden	1:54
[07]	Die Zikade	3:07
[08]	Mailied	2:42
[09]	Verloren	1:50
[10]	Gefunden	2:07
[11]	Nachtgedanken	4:26
[12]	Wandrers Nachtlied (b)	2:01

Sechs Lieder nach C. F. Meyer

[13]	Der römische Brunnen	3:07
[14]	Neujahrsglocken	4:17
[15]	Unter den Sternen	3:20
[16]	Der Gesang des Meeres	5:46
[17]	Auf dem Canal grande	2:51
[18]	Jetzt rede du!	3:49
		Total 54:07

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GIOVANNI AULETTA — PIANO

Wilhelm Kempff was born in Jüteborg (Brandenburg) on November 25, 1895 into a family of musicians who contributed to the growth of an extraordinary musical talent. He possessed a natural predisposition both for keyboard instruments and for composition, which manifested itself early, as shown by a recording made by his father, musical director at the church of San Nicola in Potsdam.

In fact, Wilhelm Kempff began to perform when he was still a child, and already in 1904 at the admission exam at the Royal Academy of Arts in Berlin, the very young boy was able to play numerous preludes and fugues from the Well-Tempered Clavier by Bach and perform very complex transposition exercises.

The young talent was entrusted to the care of Heinrich Barth who had already studied piano and composition with Hans von Bülow and Robert Kahn from the school of Brahms. His brilliant course of studies led him to receive the Mendelssohn Prize as the best graduate in both disciplines.

His dazzling career began as a virtuoso of the organ as well as the piano. His first success came when, at an early age, he performed on a successful tour of Scandinavia with the Berlin Cathedral Choir. His greatest admirer and patron was the bishop of Uppsala, Nathan Sœderblom, to whom the young composer dedicated his Fantasy and Fugue for organ in D major.

It is not surprising that one of the great pianists of the 20th century played the organ with such mastery and that he deeply loved the sacred repertoire, if we consider that both his father and grandfather were important singers of ecclesiastical music.

Eckhard von Hoogen, writing about Kempff, tells us that: «The organ, the piano and the composition were equally important for a long time, and it is surprising how an acclaimed organist, such as he was in Sweden, became an equally and even more eminent pianist».

However, his career as an organist remained increasingly in the background, despite the fact that he continued to study and occasionally give concerts on this noble instrument. Memorable were the performances in the Church of Peace in Hiroshima in 1954 and in Tokyo in 1961. The great French organ master Marcel Dupré leaves us a precious testimony of their meeting at his home in London:

«*Wilhelm Kempff* […] *asked me questions about the arrangements* […] *of my organ and performed flawlessly Bach's Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor BWV 582. I was astonished and elated at the same time. I thought I had received a famous piano virtuoso, but I discovered in him a first-rate organist*».

Eventually, his career as a pianist took over and accompanied him as a constant until the age of 87, offering him the highest recognitions.

Here is a precious testimony of the music critic Karl Schumann on the occasion of the anniversary of the edition of Beethoven's Sonatas dating back to 1980:

« […] *His path started from the originality of his youth and then extended to the subtly nuanced sound poetry of adulthood to the parsimonious style of senility* […] *It played finely and brilliantly, without lacking in depth. Kempff is a poet who writes with the piano keyboard* […] »

His recordings dedicated to Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann and Liszt are considered among the most successful and definitive interpretations of the twentieth century, considering that he was one of the

first to record the complete Schubert Sonatas when they were still largely unknown to the majority of the public. His chamber collaborations with musicians like Yehudi Menuhin, Pierre Fournier, and Mstislav Rostropovic contributed to his fame in Europe, but also in Asia. However, it was only in 1964 when, at the age of almost 70, he debuted at New York's Carnegie Hall, earning the passionate esteem of Leonard Bernstein.

Kempff's activity as a composer is little known, though he himself considered it one of the most important means of exercising his creativity.

In fact, it was his first teacher Robert Kahn who suggested to the young student to devote himself exclusively to composition, although Kempff preferred not to follow this advice.

The vastness of his catalog is surprising, and includes numerous chamber works, at least 200 sacred and secular vocal works, many organ pieces, numerous choral compositions, cantatas, a Te Deum and an oratorio, pieces for piano (a Piano Sonata, suites, album sheets and two concertos for piano and orchestra) for organ, symphonies, and an Opera dedicated to Friedrich II.

Among all these artistic efforts there are real gems such as Symphony No. 2 in D minor op. 19, performed for the first time in Leipzig in 1924 by the Gewandhaus orchestra conducted by Wilhelm Furtwängler.

Kempff adhered to a late romantic style, following his great sensitivity and above all his neoclassical background. However, we must not think that he was far from the cultural climate of his time, because the solutions he chooses are always very original. Without forgetting that he said of himself: after all, « *I was born when Brahms was still alive!* »

In the art of composing, Wilhelm Kempff reveals a great knowledge of the elegant technical connections of counterpoint, an imaginative use of melodic direction and a creative elaboration of the instrumental but above all vocal parts, as in the lieder.

The lieder for voice and piano, in fact, can be considered a central point of his career, because he will compose them throughout his life.

Kempff enters the legacy of this typically German genre, experimenting the relationship between word and music in a personal way but without detaching too much from tradition.

For the composer, the poetic quality was of the utmost importance and in fact his choices concerned important German authors such as J.W. Goethe, L.Uhland, J.V. Eichendorff, C.F. Meyer or Chr. Morgenstern, in addition to writers of the Middle Ages and the ancient world.

He always scrupulously avoided mediocre poems or minor poets, and his piano writing favors these choices, since the accompaniment never covers the voice and the word but rather favors its expressiveness.

The style that emerges is undoubtedly close to Schubert's world but with absolutely personal and original results, so that the poetic Stimmung (atmosphere) of the text, the metric of the verse and the message hidden behind the words have a direct influence on the musical composition.

The performers of this cd are very grateful to Mrs. Annette Von Bodecker, who has been very generous in giving advice for reconstructing some biographical events.

The order of the pieces presented in this disc is not based on the opus numbers indicated by Kempff, because he has given away many of his works, especially songs. For this reason some compositions no longer exist in that original order.
We have therefore chosen to group these songs according to the authors who inspired Kempff, and the order of presentation was made according to a personal choice based on the contrast between the various pieces.
Unfortunately many compositions were destroyed by fire in the private archive, and what remains is located in the Der Kunste Archive in Berlin.
Mrs. Annette keeps the memory of the Maestro and his Foundation, which is located in Positano on the Amalfi Coast in Southern Italy. A magical place, which Kempff chose when, from a young age, he fell in love with its sea and blue sky.
Here he decided to spend the last part of his life making music with musician friends and students, to share the serenity that the place inspires, and here he ended his life on May 23, 1991.

Giovanni Auletta © 2023

Giuseppe Auletta was born in Naples and made his debut as a theater actor at a very young age. A varied and articulated path leads him to deepen his work on the stage also as a singer.
He was engaged by Antonio Fava for the comedy La Cortigiana Innamorata, with music by Orlando di Lasso, at the Ancient Music Festival of Urbino. Then he works in the Callas Masterclass alongside Rossella Falk, in a successful tour that touches, among others, the Manzoni theater in Milan, the Eliseo in Rome, the Comunale in Bologna, the Grace Kelly in Montecarlo, the Pergola in Florence, the Diana theater in Napoles, the Goldoni theater in Venice.
He made his debut at the Rome Opera as a solo singer in Butterfly and Parrots, alongside Carla Fracci, Mariano Rigillo, Massimo Ghini.
Also at the Rome Opera he is the protagonist as tenor soloist in the ballet "Pulcinella" by Stravinsky. Particularly interested in the relationship between music and speech, he specialized in the knowledge of the vocal and popular repertoire of European tradition with particular attention to that of his own origins. He dedicates himself to the rediscovery of unknown repertoires, which he combines in numerous projects with the classic Neapolitan song.
Giuseppe Auletta actively participates in a project entitled Canti Paralleli together with the composer Antonello Paliotti on the rewriting of the classical repertoire of the Neapolitan song. The aim is to use this repertoire in comparison with other vocal chamber music repertoires of European popular origin.
He graduated with honors in Singing and Vocal Chamber Music at the Briccialdi Conservatory of

Music in Terni. In addition to carrying out an intense concert activity, he is a tenor in the Chorus of the Teatro dell'Opera in Rome.

Giovanni Auletta was born in Naples and graduated with honors from the S. Pietro a Majella Conservatory under the guidance of Sergio Fiorentino. Subsequently he graduated under the guidance of Sergio Perticaroli with full marks and honors at the Accademia di S. Cecilia in Rome. He graduated with honors in Musicology at the School of Musical Paleography of Cremona of the University of Pavia.
Winner of some piano competitions ("Schumann" of Macugnaga, "Schubert" of Dortmund, Germany, "City of Senigallia"), he has been a guest of important Festivals in the major Italian institutions (in the seasons of the Accademia S. Cecilia and Teatro Dell'Opera in Rome, for the Associazione Associazione Scarlatti, Associazione Internazionale Chopin in Naples, for the Società dei Concerti, the Sala Fazioli and the Bocconi University in Milan, for the Estate Musicale Sorrentina and the Società di Concerti in Ravello, for the Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa, etc.) and abroad, in the main halls of cities such as Vienna, Paris, Amsterdam, Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, Dortmund, Berlin, Tokyo, New York, Miami, Panama City, Buenos Aires etc.. dedicating himself to both the solo and chamber repertoire.
He was hired by the Mozart Gesellschaft Salzburg for a series of concerts with the Berlin Symphony Orchestra, and then he was invited for a tour with the NovoSibirsk and St. Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra.
He recorded for Emi Classics a double CD of works by F.P. Tosti which received a special prize from the critics and from the Istituto Tostiano of Ortona.
He is taking care, as reviewer, of the publication of the manuscripts of Wilhelm Kempff's music for the Da Vinci publishing house - with already three volumes to his credit - thanks to the availability of the Akademie der Künste of Berlin which holds the entire legacy and of this author has recorded the complete chamber music for the Brilliant Classics label.
For the same label in 2022 he recorded, together with Ginevra Petrucci, the entire works of Beethoven for flute and piano in three cds.
Intensely interested in the world of theater and vocality, he has collaborated actively as a pianist and concertatore in productions with artists such as Vanessa Redgrave and Carla Fracci at the Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa, the Teatro Greco in Syracuse and the Teatro Politeama in Naples.
He is a professor at the Conservatorio di Santa Cecilia in Rome and is regularly invited for masterclasses and seminars in prestigious Universities such as: Escuela di Canto di Madrid, Conservatorio Superior de Madrid, Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien, Taiyuan University in the province of Shanxi in China.



Photo by Alessandro Auletta

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