

## Handel – Suites for Harpsichord Nos. 1-4 (1972/2015) [Glenn Gould]

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Suite No. 1 in A Major, HWV 426 1 *I. Prelude* 02:17 2 *II. Allemande* 03:06 3 *III. Courante* 02:20 4 *IV. Gigue* 02:01  
427 Suite No. 2 in F Major, HWV 427 5 *I. Adagio* 02:29 6 *II. Allegro* 01:26 7 *III. Adagio* 01:57 8 *IV. Allegro – Fuga* 01:55  
Suite No. 3 in D Minor, HWV 428 9 *I. Prelude. Presto* 00:59 10 *II. Allegro – Fugue* 01:55 11 *III. Allemande* 02:31 12 *IV. Courante* 01:56 13 *V. Air* 03:59 14 *Variation 1* 00:42 15 *Variation 2* 00:40 16 *Variation 3* 00:40 17 *Variation 4* 00:48 18 *Variation 5* 00:36 19 *VI. Presto* 02:03  
Suite No. 4 in E Minor, HWV 429 20 *I. Allegro – Fugue* 02:49 21 *II. Allemande* 01:10 22 *III. Courante* 01:17 23 *IV. Sarabande* 02:48 24 *V. Gigue* 01:04  
Glenn Gould - Harpsichord

Handel's standing as one of the greatest composers of the high baroque period is based on his *Messiah*, dozens of other oratorios and operas, *Water Music*, and *Music for the Royal Fireworks*. His works for solo keyboard do not get prime exposure although recordings of these works are not infrequent. Are Handel's Suites for Keyboard lesser creations? Definitely not. His supreme gift for melody is readily apparent in his keyboard works, just on a smaller scale than found in his orchestral and vocal works. Be it poignant *Sarabandes* or super-charged *Gigues*, Handel's Suites are life-affirming and beautiful creations.

I should mention the organization of Handel's Suites for Keyboard. He composed twenty Suites, but only eight are generally grouped together. They are designated as HWV 426 thru 433 and are often referred to as the *Eight Great Suites* or the *Eight Suites for Keyboard*.

For a rather odd alternative, we have Glenn Gould playing four of the Eight Suites on a

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harpsichord. Guess what? He plays them just as he would on the piano. Regardless, his interpretations are always interesting. Gould's penchant for ceremony, precision, and propulsion are in full display, and his Prelude from Suite #1 is amazing for its improvisatory and busy character replete with a Latin American flavor. ---Don Satz, classical.net

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