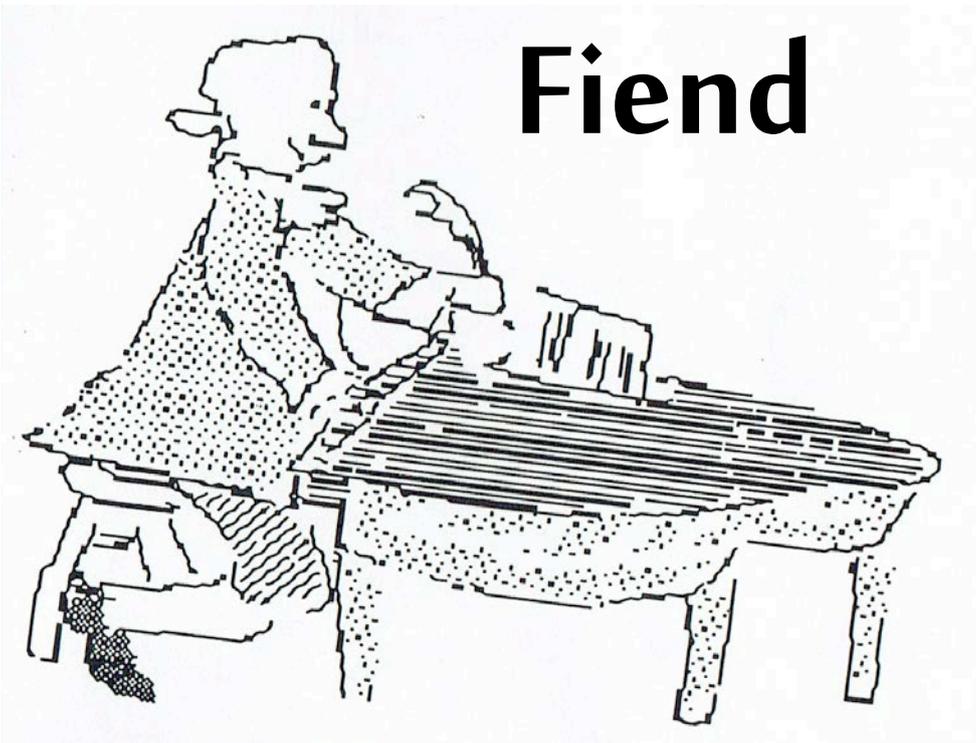


# The Muffin Fiend



A children's opera

based on the book 'The Muffin Fiend' by Daniel Pinkwater

music by

## DIANA BLOM

# The Muffin Fiend

The children's opera, *The Muffin Fiend*, was written in 1990 and received its first performance in 1991 by Wenona Junior School in Sydney, Australia. Drawing on a number of musical influences, (including Mozart), the music takes cues from Pinkwater's classic children book of the same name, first published by Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Books, New York in 1986.

The libretto is based on *The Muffin Fiend* by Daniel Pinkwater, by arrangement with the Andrew Brown Literary Agency, Inc.; the cover illustration, by Daniel Pinkwater, is used with permission.

# **The Muffin Fiend**

**Libretto by Daniel Pinkwater and Diana Blom**  
**Music by Diana Blom**

The book, *The Muffin Fiend* was written by Daniel Pinkwater and published by Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Books, New York in 1986. The children's opera is designed for the 8-12 year age group. It has solo and chorus roles, plus some speaking parts.

**Cast:** Chorus of singers – Viennese townsfolk, some of whom are shoppers, some cooks  
Inspector LeChat – solo singer  
His group of detectives – large or small (as required) group of singers  
One solo detective - singer  
The Mayor of Vienna – singer  
Mozart – singer and speaking in rhythm  
Constanze (Mozart's wife) – singer  
Don Pastrami – singer  
Householder – speech  
Muffin cooks 1 and 2 – speech  
Muffin shoppers 1 and 2 – speech  
Official – speech  
Peasant – speech

**Music:**

Piano (adult) essential

Piano (student) the music is essential, but a student playing the music is not essential

Violin solo (student) – the music is essential, but a student playing the music is preferable but not essential

Turkish music (section V) - cymbal, triangle, 2 wood blocks/claves/hollow wooden instruments, xylophone

Snare drum, bass drum

Optional sections – flutes, recorders, suspended cymbal, 2 glockenspiel

(Vienna, Austria. Early morning in the village square. Some householders are waking up and preparing for the new day; others are dancing to a Viennese waltz which fills the air)

**Chorus of townsfolk of Vienna (sung):**

Muffins, muffins, they're so de-licious, try one and see

Muffins, muffins, they're so nu-tritious, have one to eat.

Cherry ones, custard ones, raisin and peach,

Chocolate, blueberry, try one with cheese.

Muffins, there is nothing like stuffin' muffins with butter to eat.

(The city clock chimes six. Dancing finishes and muffin preparation begins. A stranger in a large black cloak passes furtively through these preparations)

**Householder (spoken):** It's six o'clock. Enough dancing. We must begin making our muffins for today. Light your ovens, prepare the muffin moulds – mix the ingredients!

**Chorus (sung):**

Flour and sugar and milk and butter, a small pinch of salt

Stir it well, stir it well, pour the mixture then into the oven.

Here in the Vienna each morning we go to the shops for our food;

Sausage here, maybe coffee, but never forget our muffins fresh.

(The muffin mixture is placed in the ovens)

Muffins, muffins, they're so de-licious, try one and see  
Muffins, muffins, they're so nu-tritious, have one to eat.  
Cherry ones, custard ones, raisin and peach  
Chocolate, blueberry, try one with cheese.

Muffins, there is nothing like stuffin' muffins with butter to eat – (sniff!)

(When the waltz has finished the muffins should be ready and each householder goes to their oven to check. Those who buy their muffins are leaving their front doors and heading for the nearby bakeries)

**Muffin Cook 1 (spoken):** The muffins are ready. Open the oven! But where are the muffins? There are none in my oven.

**Muffin Cook 2:** And none in mine, either.

**Muffin Shopper 1:** There are no muffins in this shop window!

**Muffin Shopper 2:** Nor in this one!

(The Mayor of Vienna enters with Inspector LeChat and his group of detectives)

**Muffin Shopper 1:** Mr. Mayor, Mr. Mayor, all the muffins in the bakery shops of Vienna have been stolen!

**Muffin Cook 1:** And all the muffins we have baked at home for our families have disappeared too.

**All Muffin Cooks and Shoppers:** This is furchtbar! We are all muffinless.

**Mayor:** Calm, ladies and gentlemen, please be calm. (holds up his hand for silence). Allow me to introduce Inspector LeChat and his band of detectives from Paris.

(Inspector LeChat and his detectives bow gallantly)

**Mayor:** In Paris there has also been a little..... Problem..... shall we say, with muffins, or rather, no muffins. Inspector LeChat has followed a warm, delicious smelling muffin-thief trail from Paris to Vienna – but I will let him tell the story.

**Inspector LeChat (music):**

I am from Paris (paree), that's in France.  
Used to be a city full of fun, but  
Somebody has eaten, eaten all our muffins,  
Now the place is muffinless and glum, but

**Inspector LeChat & the detectives:**

We don't know who's stealing them (drum beat)  
Stealing our muffins and eating them (drum beat)  
We are the detectives, trained to find out who;  
Nous ne savon pas pourquoi.

**Mayor:**

Maybe we should call in the troops.  
Raisins in their rifles, aim to shoot  
At anyone they find with muffins in their pockets.  
Find a clue and lead us to the loot. But..

**Mayor, Inspector LeChat & the detectives:**

We don't know who's stealing them (drum beat)  
Stealing our muffins and eating them (drum beat)  
We are the detectives, trained to find out who,  
Yes, we should have a clue.  
Nous ne savon pas pourquoi.

**Mozart:** We have to trap him. (removes a tiny violin from his pocket)

**Inspector LeChat:** Here comes a peasant. Let me interrogate him.

(sings) Oh, do you know the muffin fiend?

**Peasant (spoken):** never heard of him.

**Inspector LeChat:** Well, where is the muffin fiend? And what a tiny violin! You can't expect to capture the fiend with that!

**Mozart:** I used to play this small violin when I was a very small boy. (begins to play the violin)

(Violin music 1)

**Inspector LeChat:** What is this music?

**Mozart:** It is the music of the spheres. It is cosmic music.

**Inspector LeChat:** It doesn't sound funny to me.

**Mozart (impatiently):** Cosmic, not comic. This music will bring the extra-terrestrial to us.

(Mozart tunes up and plays an inviting air. Violin music 2)

**Mayor:** I don't think he's coming.

**Mozart:** He's coming.

**Mayor:** I think he's going.

**Mozart:** He's not going. He's coming. (as Mozart begins playing Violin music 2 again, a figure slowly emerges, hiding from tree to tree as it approaches. When close, Mozart stops playing and sings...)  
Don Pastrami, I've come to get you!

**Don Pastrami (singing):** You'll never get me!

**Mozart:** Oh yes I will!

(speaking) You are the awful muffin fiend!

(spoken quickly with an emphasis on the bold/accented words and accompanied by recitative )

**Don Pastrami:** (spoken) I **am**!

**Mozart:** Why did you take the muffins?

**Don Pastrami:** I **did** it. I **felt** like it. That's all.

**Inspector LeChat:** You must have had a reason.

**Don Pastrami:** I **didn't** have a reason. Go away.

**Mozart:** Tell me. Tell me **why** you took the muffins.

**Don Pastrami:** **No.**

**Mozart:** Tell me.

**Don Pastrami:** **No.**

**Inspector LeChat:** Go on, tell, tell.

**Don Pastrami:** **No, No!** Don't **want** to.

43  
Chorus

Muf-fins, muf-fins, they're so nu - tri-tious, have one to eat.

*rubato*

49  
Chorus

*a tempo* *f* [Can be sung in 3rds]

Cher-ry ones, cus-tard ones, rai-sin and peach, cho-co-late,

*rubato*

**C** *a tempo* *legato*

Chorus

Flou-r and su-gar and mi-lik and but-ter, a small pinch of salt. stir it  
Here in Vi-en-na, each mor-ning, we go to the shops for our food. Sau-sage

*mp* (continue)

94  
Chorus

well, stir it well, pour the mix-ture then in-to the o-ven.  
here, may-be cof-fee, but ne-ver for... *rubato*

## The Muffin Fiend

## II

**Andante but flexible** ♩ = 92

**Inspector LeChat**

*mf*

I am from Pa - ris, that's in France.

**Piano**

*f* *mp* *mp*

**Insp. LC**

*f rubato* *a tempo* *rubato*

Used to be a ci - ty full of fun, but, some - bo - dy has ea - ten, ea - ten all our muf - fins,

*mf*

**All**

*a tempo* *mf*

94 Nous ne sa - von pas pour - quoi.

*mp* *p*

# The Muffin Fiend

## III

Inspector LeChat: Mozart, the composer and detective! Sacre bleu! An excellent idea.  
Mr. Mayor, do you know where Herr Mozart lives? Take us there.

[The group walk to Mozart's house, led by the Mayor.]

**Fast as possible**

The musical score consists of three systems of piano accompaniment in 4/4 time. The first system is marked *mf* and features a rapid, repetitive eighth-note pattern in the right hand, while the left hand is silent. The second system, marked with a '3' above the treble clef, shows the right hand playing a single quarter note followed by a whole rest, while the left hand continues with a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The third system, marked with a '4' above the treble clef, returns to the rapid eighth-note pattern in the right hand, with the left hand providing a simple harmonic accompaniment. The piece concludes with a final chord in the right hand.

Mayor: This is Mozart's house. Listen, he is composing music.

[The sound of piano playing, a familiar air, wafts down from the window.]

# IV

**Giocoso doloroso** ♩ = c.60  
*mf*

Constanze

No cher-ry muf-fins, goose-ber-ry, no cus-tard ones for tea, no

*mf* *mp*

6

Constanze

choc-'lat, peach or cheese. No rasp-ber-ry or blue-b'rry muf-fins, rai-sin, wal-nut,

[Play melody if required.]

## Turkish Music V

♩ = c.120 As comfortably as Mozart can speak in rhythm - clearly.

Mozart

Now a ci - ty of the size of Vi  
Since a great ma - ny more than that

Cymbal Triangle

Wood Blocks

Snare Drum

Xylophone

Piano

*mf* *mp* *p*