

Anne Sofie von Otter sings Baroque Arias (1990)

Written by bluesever
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Handel, George Frideric 1 *Hercules, HWV 60, Act III: Accompagnato: Where shall I fly Where hide this guilty head* 2 *Giulio Cesare in Egitto, HWV 17, Act III: Recitative: E pur così in un giorno*
Monteverdi, Claudio 3 *Scherzi musicali, SV 230-245 - O rosetta, che rosetta, SV 237* 4 *Scherzi musicali, SV 230-245 - La violetta ch'en su l'herbetta, SV 240* 5 *Lamento d'Arianna, SV 22 - 1a parte - Lasciatemi morire*
Telemann, Georg Philipp
6 *Trauer - Music eines kunsterfahrenen Canarienvogels, TWV 20:37*
Handel, George Frideric
7 *Semele, HWV 58, Act II: Aria: Where'er you walk*
Anne Sofie Von Otter - mezzo-soprano Drottningholms Barockensemble Anders Öhrwall - conductor

This is rather a special record and worth looking out for in spite of its poor value in playing-time. With one additional item (the aria by Johan Roman), it is a transfer of the LP which this now-famous singer made in 1983 and which was her first solo recording. I remember it well, though it was unissued here, because a reader of Gramophone in Switzerland heard it and was so impressed that he very kindly sent me a copy with a covering letter which mentioned recent performances in *Hansel und Gretel* and *La clemenza di Tito* in which "she displayed a most beautiful and full-bodied mezzo voice". He hoped for more, particularly for some operatic recordings, and, as we know, did not have long to wait. The voice heard here is perhaps a shade lighter than the one we have come to know, and the art, though strong in character, is just a little less bold. But there is no mistaking the distinction. Dajaneira's great scene in *Hercules* is vividly dramatic and highly accomplished in technical skill. Cleopatra's "Piangero" is warm but unencumbered by sticky romanticism. The Monteverdi songs are most delightful of all, although one should not forget the extra item, the charmingly pastoral *Agnus Dei* from Roman's Swedish Mass, which was recorded at a live performance in Stockholm in October 1983. The 'Canary' Cantata poses the problem of just how much overt satire should be allowed into the singer's performance—personally, I could do with a little less. I would also like less of the bellows effect (squeeze and fade) from the baroque strings in "Where'er you walk"; perhaps even a more thorough-going commitment to legato in the voice. And we are all likely to wish the

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church-acoustics were less reverberant. Still, there is pleasure and interest in the record, and it has an assured place in the archives.' ---gramophone.co.uk

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